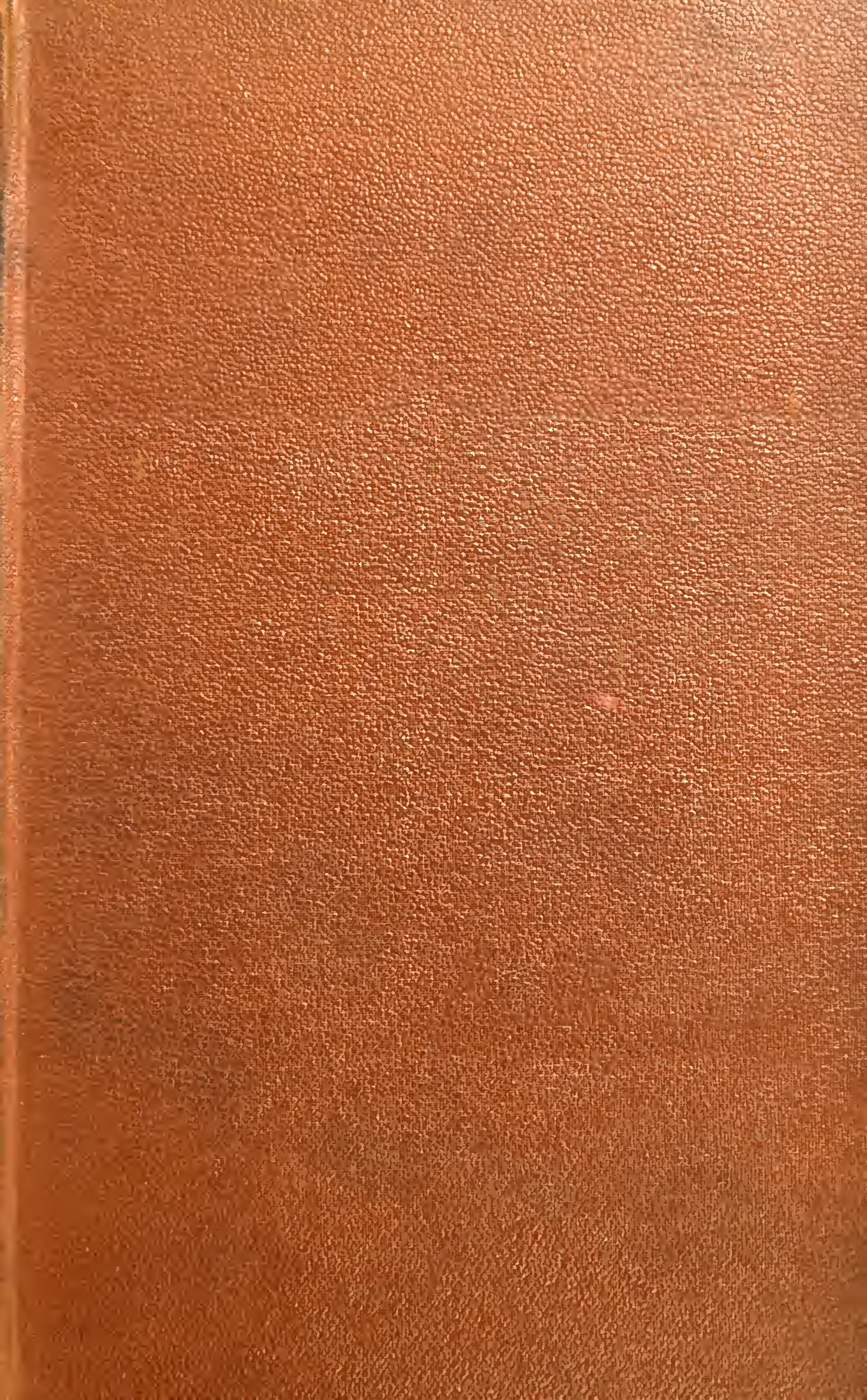






THURLAND CASTLE.


15d

NORTHERN ANTIQUITIES:

OR

A DESCRIPTION

OF THE

Manners, Customs, Religion and Laws

OF THE

ANCIENT DANES,

INCLUDING THOSE OF

OUR OWN SAXON ANCESTORS.

WITH A TRANSLATION OF THE EDDA, OR SYSTEM OF RUNIC MYTHOLOGY, AND OTHER PIECES, FROM THE ANCIENT ICELANDIC TONGUE.

Translated from "L'Introduction a l'Histoire de Dannemarc, &c. Par Mons. MALLET."

WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES BY THE ENGLISH TRANSLATOR, AND GORANSON'S LATIN VERSION OF THE EDDA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY C. STEWART.

1809.

TO HIS GRACE

THE

DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

MY LORD,

THE following work is inscribed to your Grace with the most genuine respect, and, I flatter myself, not without propriety, since it may possibly afford amusement to one of the most polished Noblemen of the present age, to observe from what rude and simple beginnings our highest improvements have been derived; and to trace to their source those peculiarities of character, manners and government, which so remarkably distinguish the Teutonic nations.

Among the historical digressions which our Author has scattered through his work, is a full relation of the first settlement of the NORMANS in France. This cannot but be interesting to your Grace, as the great Family, which you so nobly represent, derived their origin from one of the Northern Chiefs who assisted in that conquest. From the place of their residence in Lower Normandy *, they took the name of PERCY; a name which was afterwards eminently celebrated in our English annals, and which you have revived with additional lustre.

* Near Villedieu, in the District of St Lo.

Among the many shining and amiable qualities which distinguish your Grace and the Duchess of Northumberland, none have apeared to me more truly admirable than that high respect and reverence which you both of you show for the heroic Race whose possessions you inherit.

Superior to the mean and selfish jealousy of those, who, conscious of their own want of dignity or worth, consign to oblivion the illustrious dead, and wish to blot out all remembrance of them from the earth; you, my Lord, have, with a more than filial piety, been employed for many years in restoring and reviving every memorial of the PERCY name.

Descended, yourself, from a most ancient and respectable family; and not afraid to be compared with your noble predecessors, the Earls of NORTHUMBERLAND, you have repaired their monuments, rebuilt their castles, and replaced their trophies: and whatever appears to be any way connected with them, is sure to attract your attention and regard.

With this generosity of mind, added to your taste, munificence, and love of the arts, can we wonder that your name is the delight and ornament of the English nation? or that it is equally dear to a sister country, where your upright and disinterested plan of government, your politeness and magnificence established your dominion over every heart; and where the engaging and

exalted

exalted virtues of the Duchess have left an impression never to be effaced.

That you may both of you long enjoy those distinguished honours, and that princely fortune, which you so highly adorn: That they may be transmitted down, in your own posterity, to the latest ages, is the sincere and fervent wish of,

My Lord,

Your Grace's

Most humble, and

Most devoted servant,

THE EDITOR.

THE

TRANSLATOR'S

PREFACE.

THE Author of the following Work had a share in the education of that amiable Prince, CHRISTIAN VII. King of Denmark, who lately honoured this nation with a visit. During his residence in the North, our Author, Mons. MALLET (who has all the talents of a fine writer) was engaged by the late King, FREDERICK V. to write a History of Denmark in the French Language. By way of Introduction to that History, he drew up these two prefatory Volumes, the merit of which has long been acknowledged in most parts of Europe.

Though intended only as a Preliminary Piece, it has all the merit of a complete independent work; and, except to the natives of Denmark, is much more interesting and entertaining than the History itself, which it was intended to precede. It very early engaged the attention of the present Translator; whose reading having run somewhat in the same track with that of the Author, made him fond of the subject, and tempted him to give, in an English dress, a work in which it was displayed with so much advantage. As he happened also to have many of the original books from which the French Author had taken his materials, he flattered himself they would supply some illustrations, which might give an additional value to the Version.

For this reason, as also to afford himself an agreeable amusement, the Translator some time ago undertook this work; but a series of unexpected avocations intervened, and it was thrown aside for several years. At length he was prevailed upon to resume it; and as many of his friends were so obliging as to share among them different parts of the translation, he had little more to do, but to compare their per-

formances with the original, and to superadd such remarks as occurred to him. These are generally distinguished from those of the Author by the letter T *.

He was the rather invited to undertake this task, as he perceived the Author had been drawn in to adopt an opinion that has been a great source of mistake and confusion to many learned writers of the ancient history of Europe; viz. that of supposing the ancient Gauls and Germans, the Britons and Saxons, to have been all originally one and the same people; thus confounding the antiquities of the Gothic and Celtic nations. This crude opinion, which perhaps was first taken up by Cluverius †, and maintained by him with uncommon erudition, has been since incautiously adopted by Keysler ‡ and Pelloutier §, the latter of whom has, with great diligence and skill, endeavoured to confirm it. In short, so much learning and ingenuity have scarcely ever been more perversely and erroneously applied, or brought to adorn and support a more groundless hypothesis. This mistake the Translator thought might be easily corrected in the present work; and by weeding out this one error, he hoped he should obtain the Author's pardon, and acquire some merit with the English reader ||.

And that it is an error, he thinks will appear from the attentive consideration of a few particulars, which can here be only mentioned in brief: For to give the subject a thorough discussion, and to handle it in its full extent, would far exceed the limits of this short Preface.

The ancient and original inhabitants of Europe, according to Cluverius and Pelloutier, consisted only of two distinct races of men, viz. the Celts and Sarmatians; and that from one or other of these, but chiefly from the former, all the ancient nations of Europe are descended. The Sarmatians, or Sauromatæ, were the ancestors of all the Sclavonian tribes, viz. the Poles, Russians, Bohemians, Walachians,

* When the present translation was undertaken, only the first edition of the original had appeared; and from that several of the first chapters were translated: In that edition, the first volume was not, as here, divided into XIII. Chapters, but into V. Books. Afterwards, the Author revised his work, and published a new edition, in which he not only made the new division above-mentioned, but many considerable alterations both in the Text and Notes. It was necessary to accommodate the version to this new revisal, but the Translator could not help retaining in the margin many of the rejected passages, which he thought too valuable to be wholly discarded.

† Philippi Cluverii Germaniæ Antiquæ Libri Tres, &c. Lugduni Batav. apud Elzev. 1616. folio.

‡ Antiquitates Selectæ Septentrionales et Celticæ, &c. Autore Joh. Georgio Keysler, &c. Hannoveræ 1720. 8vo.

§ Histoire des Celtes, et particulierement des Gaulois et des Germains, &c. par Mr. Simon Pelloutier. Haye 1750. 2 Tom. 12mo. This learned writer, who is a protestant Minister, Counsellor of the Consistory, and Librarian to the Academy at Berlin, is descended from a family originally of Languedoc, and was born at Leipsic, 27th October, 1694, O. S. (*v. France literaire, Tom. I.*)

|| Though the words *Gothic* or *Teutonic* are often substituted in the translation instead of the Author's favourite word *Celtique;* yet care has been taken to represent the Author's own expression in the margin. Sometimes, where it was not needful to be very precise, the word Gothic has only been added to the Author's word Celtic; but the insertion is carefully distinguished by inverted commas.

ans, &c. who continue to this day a distinct and separate people, extremely different in their character, manners, laws, and language from the other race, which was that of the Celts; from whom (they will have it) were uniformly descended the old inhabitants of Gaul, Germany, Scandinavia, Britain, and Spain, who were all included by the ancients under the general name of Hyperboreans, Scythians, and Celts, being all originally of one race and nation, and having all the same common language, religion, laws, customs, and manners.

This is the position which these writers have adopted, and maintained with an uncommon display of deep erudition, and a great variety of ſpecious arguments. But that their position, so far as relates to the Celts, is erroneous, and the arguments that support it inconclusive, will appear, if it can be shewn, That ancient Germany, Scandinavia, Gaul, and Britain, were not inhabited by the descendants of one single race; but, on the contrary, divided between two very different people; the one of whom we shall call, with most of the Roman authors, CELTIC, who were the ancestors of the Gauls, Britons, and Irish; the other, GOTHIC, or TEUTONIC, from whom the Germans, Belgians, Saxons, and Scandinavians derived their origin; and that these were, *ab origine*, two distinct people, very unlike in their manners, customs, religion, and laws.

As to the arguments by which Cluverius and Pelloutier support their hypothesis, that the Gothic and Celtic nations were the same, they may all be reduced to two heads; viz. either to QUOTATIONS from the ancient Greek and Roman writers, or to ETYMOLOGIES of the names of persons or places, &c.

With regard to the latter, (viz. Etymologies), these two writers lay it down, that the present German, or High Dutch, is a genuine daughter of the ancient Celtic or Gaulish language *; because, from it they can explain the etymology of innumerable names that were well known to be Gaulish or Celtic †; and this being admitted, it must follow, that the Germans are a branch of the Celts; and consequently, that the Celtic and Teutonic nations were the same. In prosecuting this argument, it must be acknowledged, that they have produced many instances that appear at first sight very plausible. But whoever considers how little we can depend upon the Etymology of obsolete words, derived from barbarous dead languages, in which there are no books extant, will not build very securely on proofs of this sort. No one will assert, that the present German bears any resemblance now to the modern Welsh and Irish languages; and yet there are writers in abundance, who will undertake to account for the name of almost every place, person, or office in ancient Europe, from one or other of these two living tongues, and will produce instances full as plausible and conclusive as any adduced by Cluverius or his followers;

* *La langue Alemande est un reste de l' ancienne langue des Celtes.* Pelloutier, Vol. I. p. 165, &c.

† Vid. Cluv. lib. I. cap. vi, vii, viii, &c. Pellout. liv. I. chap. xv.

ers *. After all, there is probably a good deal of truth on both sides; I can readily believe that all the names of places and persons in ancient Germany, or such other countries as any of the Gothic or Teutonic nations at any time penetrated into, will be reducible to the language now spoken by their descendants: And that in like manner, from the Irish and Welsh languages, which may be allowed to be genuine daughters of the ancient Gallic or Celtic tongue †, it will be easy to explain such names as were imposed by any of the ancient Celtic or Gallic tribes. Indeed, in the very remote ages, prior to history, one cannot pretend to say what were the distinct bounds or limits of each people. They were, like all other barbarous nations, roving and unsettled, and often varied their situation; being sometimes spread over a country, at other times driven out by some stronger tribe of barbarians, or forsaking it themselves in search of new settlements. Cæsar informs us, that some of the Gallic tribes forced their way into Germany, and there established themselves ‡. It is equally probable that, before his time, bands of Germans might at different periods penetrate into Gaul §; where, although their numbers might be too small to preserve them a distinct nation, yet these emigrants might import many names of persons and places that would outlive the remembrance of their founders. This will sufficiently account for the dispersion of words derived from both languages, and inform us why Celtic derivations may be found in Germany, and German names discovered in Gaul. So much for arguments derived from Etymology; which are so very uncertain and precarious, that they can only amount to presumptions at best, and can never be opposed to solid positive proofs.

With regard to the other source of arguments, by which these learned writers support their opinion of the identity of the Gauls and Germans, viz. QUOTATIONS from the ancient Greek and Roman authors, these they have produced in great abundance. But even if it should be granted that the Greeks and Romans applied sometimes the names of Celtic, Scythian, or Hyperborean, indiscriminately to the ancient inhabitants of Germany and Gaul, of Britain and Scandinavia, the inference will still be doubted by those that consider how little known

* See that excellent antiquary Lluyd, in Archæologia Britannica, &c. not to mention many late writers of a different stamp, viz. Jones, Parsons, &c. &c.

† That the present Welsh language is the genuine daughter of the ancient British, spoken in the time of the Romans, cannot be disputed; because we have now extant MSS. writ in every age from the Roman times down to the present, which plainly prove the descent, and are not unintelligible to the present inhabitants of Wales. (See Evans's Specimens of Welsh Poetry, 4to.) Now, that the ancient British differed little from the Gaulish, we are assured by Tacitus. *Sermo haud multum diversus.* Tacit. Agric. c. ii.

‡ *Fuit antea tempus cum Germanos Galli virtute superarent et ultrò bella inferrent, ac . . . . trans Rhenum colonias mitterent, &c.* Vid. plura apud Cæs. de Bell. Gall. lib. vi.

§ This Cæsar expressly tells us of the Belgæ, who were settled to the north of the Seine and the Marne. *Plerosque Belgas esse ortos à Germania; Rhenumque antiquitus transductos, propter loci fertilitatem ibi consedisse; Gallosque qui ea loca incollerent, expulisse.* De Bell. Gall. lib. ii.

known all these nations were to the early writers of Greece and Rome; who, giving them all the general name of Barbarians, inquired little farther about them, and took very little pains to be accurately informed about their peculiar differences and distinctions. Even a long time after these rude nations had begun to press upon the empire, and had made the Romans dread their valour, still their writers continued to have so confused and indistinct a knowledge of their different descent and character, as to confound both the Celts and Goths with the Sarmatians, whom all writers allow to have been a distinct nation from them both *: Thus Zosimus, an historian of the third century, includes them all under the common name of Scythians †; and this at a time when, after their long and frequent intercourse with the Romans, their historians ought to have been taught to distinguish them better.

However, the Greek and Roman authors were not all equally indistinct and confused on this subject. It will be shewn below, that some of their best and most discerning writers, when they had an opportunity of being well informed, knew how to distinguish them accurately enough: So that both Cluverius and Pelloutier have found themselves much puzzled how to reconcile such stubborn passages with their own favourite hypothesis, and have been entangled in great difficulties in endeavouring to get over the objections these occasion. Even with regard to the more early historians, they appear to have been sometimes more precise and accurate in their descriptions. There is a remarkable passage of this kind in Strabo ‡; in which he informs us, that, although the old Greek authors gave all the northern nations the common name of Scythians, or Celtoscythians, yet that writers *still more ancient* §, divided all "the nations who lived beyond the "Euxine, the Danube, and the Adriatic Sea, into the *Hyperboreans*, "the *Sauromatæ*, and *Arimaspians*; as they did those beyond the Cas-"pian Sea into the *Sacæ* and *Messagetæ*." These Sacæ and Messagetæ might possibly be the ancestors of the Saxons and the Goths, (as these last are fully proved to have been the Getæ of the ancients ‖), who, in the time of those very remote Greek writers, possibly had not penetrated so far westward as they did afterwards. As it is well known that the *Germanii* are mentioned by Herodotus ¶ as a Persian people. Now the most authentic historians and poets of the Gothic or Teutonic nations all agree that their ancestors came at different emigrations from the more eastern countries **. But with regard to the

* See Pelloutier, vol. I. liv. 1. ch. ii. passim.

† See Pelloutier, vol. I. p. 17.

‡ Strabo, lib. xi. Απαντας μεν δη τους Προσβορους κοινως οι παλαιοι των Ελληνων συγγραφεις, Σκυθαι και Κελτοσκυθαι εκαλουν, &c. Vid. Cluv. lib. i. p. 22. Pellout. vol. I. p. 2.

§ Οι δε ΕΤΙ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ διελοντες, &c.

‖ See Pelloutier, liv. I. ch. viii. vol. I. p. 46, 47, &c. notes.

¶ Herod. in Clio. Αλλοι δε Περσαι εισι οιδε, Πανθηλιαιοι, Δηρουσιαιοι, ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΟΙ. Edit. R. Steph. 1570. pag. 34.

** All the old northern scalds and historians agree that their ancestors came thither from the East; but then some of them, to do the greater honour to their country,

the three other nations, the Hyperboreans, the Sauromatæ, and the Arimaspians, if we agree with Pelloutier *, that under the two former the Celts and Sarmatians are plainly designed, when he contends † that the Arimaspians are a meer fabulous people, which never existed, who does not see that he is blinded by hypothesis! Why may not the ancient Finns or Laplanders have been intended by this term, which he himself interprets from Herodotus to signify *One-eyed*, and supposes it descriptive of some nation that excelled in archery, as alluding to their practice of winking with one eye in order to take aim ‡. Tacitus expressly assures us that the Fenni were great archers §; and, as is observed in the following book ||, it is highly probable, that, at some early period of time, both the Finns and Laplanders were possessed of much larger and better tracts of country than the northern deserts to which they are now confined.

But whether this interpretation be admitted or not, and whatever the more early Greek and Roman writers knew concerning the Celtic and Gothic nations, it is very certain, that, in latter times, such of them as had most discernment, and the best opportunities of being informed, have plainly and clearly delivered, that the Germans and Gauls were two distinct people, of different origin, manners, laws, religion, and language, and have accurately pointed out the difference between them.

Before we descend to particulars, it may be premised, that these two races of men were in many things alike, as would necessarily happen to two savage nations who lived nearly in the same climate, who were exposed to the same wants, and were obliged to relieve them by the same means. The more men approach to a state of wild and uncivilized life, the greater resemblance they will have in manners; because savage nature, reduced almost to meer brutal instinct, is simple and uniform; whereas art and refinement are infinitely various: Thus one of the rude natives of Nova Zembla will bear a strong resemblance in his manner of life to a savage of New Holland: They will both live upon fish and sea-fowls, because their desart shores afford no other food; they will both be clad in the skins of seals

country, and to its antiquities, pretend that they first made an emigration into the East from Scandinavia. See Sheringham *De Anglorum Gentis Origine. Cartabrigiæ* 1670. 8vo. passim. It is the great fault of Sheringham, not to know how to distinguish what is true and credible, from what is improbable and fabulous, in the old Northern Chronicles: Because some parts are true, he receives all for authentic; as a late ingenious writer, because some parts are fabulous, is for rejecting all as false; (See Clarke, in his learned Treatise on the Connexion between the Roman, Saxon, and English Coins, &c. Lond. 1767. 4to.) By the same rule, we might reject the whole Grecian history: For that of the North has, like it, its *fabulous*, its *doubtful*, and more *certain periods*; which acute and judicious critics will easily distinguish.

* Liv. 1. chap. i.

† Vol. 1. p. 9, 10.

‡ Pelloutier, ibid. *Αριμασπους μονοφθαλμους* . . . ΑΡΙΜΑ *γαρ Εν καλεουσι Σκυθαι*, ΣΠΟΥ *δε τον Οφθαλμον*. Herod. p. 129. 145.

§ *Sola in sagittis spes.* Tac. de Mor. Germ. cap. ult.

|| Pag. 38, 39.

seals and other sea animals, because their country affords no other cloathing; and they will both live by fishing in little boats, and be armed with lances, pointed, for want of metal, either with sharp flints, or the bones of fishes: But will it therefore be inferred, that the inhabitants of these two opposite poles of the globe were originally one and the same people? The ancient Britons, in the time of Cæsar painted their bodies, as do the present Cherokees of North America; because it would naturally enough occur to the wild people of every country, that by this practice they might render themselves terrible to their enemies: Nor will this prove that the Cherokees are descended from the ancient Britons. When, therefore, Cluverius and Pelloutier solemnly inform us, That the Germans and Gauls lived both of them in small huts or caverns: That they subsisted either on venison slain in hunting, or on the milk and cheese procured from their flocks: That both people led a wandering roving life, and equally disliked to live in cities, or follow agriculture, and of course ate little or no bread: That they both of them drank out of the horns of animals *, and either went naked, or threw a rude skin over their shoulders: When they collect a long series of such resemblances as these, and bring innumerable quotations from ancient authors to prove that all these descriptions are equally given of both people, who does not see that all these traits are found in every savage nation upon earth, and that by the same rule they might prove all the people that ever existed to be of one race and nation?

But notwithstanding these general resemblances, we have sufficient testimony from some of the most discerning ancient authors, that the Germans and Gauls, or, in other words, the Celtic and Teutonic nations, were sufficiently distinguished from each other, and differed considerably in *Person*, *Manners*, *Laws*, *Religion*, and *Language*.

Cæsar, whose judgment and penetration will be disputed by none but a person blinded by hypothesis †, and whose long residence in Gaul gave him better means of being informed than almost any of his countrymen; Cæsar expressly assures us, that the Celts, or common inhabitants of Gaul, "differed in Language, Customs, and Laws," from the Belgæ, on the one hand, who were chiefly a Teutonic people ‡, and from the inhabitants of Aquitain on the other; who, from their

* Some of the ancient German tribes drank *Beer* and *Ale*, as did the old inhabitants of Gaul. (See Pelloutier, vol. I. lib. 2. cii. ii. p. 216, 217, &c.) This, however, proves them not to be the same people, any more than our drinking tea and coffee, proves us to be descended from the Chinese and Arabians.

† Cæsar is so much more precise and positive against the hypothesis espoused by Cluverius, Keysler, Pelloutier, &c. than the common Roman authors, who were generally inattentive to the differences of the barbarous nations, that all the writers above-mentioned set out with accusing Cæsar of being for ever mistaken; whereas he and Tacitus were probably the only Romans that were generally exact.

‡ *Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres: quarum unam incolunt Belgæ, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtæ, nostra Galli apellantur. Hi omnes* lingua, institutis, legibus *inter se differunt.* Cæsar de Bello Gall. lib. 1.

Plerosque Belgas esse ortos a Germanis, &c. Ib. lib. 2. (see above, page iv. note §.)

This

their vicinity to Spain, were probably of Iberian race. Cæsar positively affirms that the nations of Gaul differed from those of Germany in their Manners, and in many other particulars, which he has enumerated at length * : And this assertion is not thrown out at random, like the passages brought by Cluverius against it; but is coolly and cautiously made, when he is going to draw the characters of both nations at length, in an exact and well finished portrait, which shows him to have studied the genius and manners of both people with great attention, and to have been compleatly master of his subject †.

It is true, the Gauls and Germans resembled each other in Complexion, and perhaps in some other respects, as might be expected from their living under the same climate, and nearly in the same manner; yet that they differed sufficiently in their *persons*, appears from Tacitus, who says, that the inhabitants of Caledonia resembled the Germans in Features; whereas the Silures were rather like the Spaniards, as the inhabitants of South Britain bore a great resemblance to the Gauls ‡: This plainly proves that the Spaniards, Germans, and Gauls were universally known to differ in their Persons.

They differed also in *Manners* and *Customs*. To instance only in one point; among the Germans, the wife did not give a dowry to her husband, but the husband to the wife, as Tacitus expressly assures us §: Whereas we learn from Cæsar, that among the Gauls the husband received a portion in money with his wife, for which he made her a suitable settlement of his goods ||, &c.

They differed no less in their *Institutions* and *Laws*. The Celtic nations do not appear to have had that equal plan of liberty, which was

This testimony is precise and formal; but Cluverius and Pelloutier have found a similar passage in Strabo, in which he says of the *Aquitani*, that their language only differed *a little* from that of the other Gauls, Ενιους ΜΙΚΡΟΝ παραλλαττοντας ταις γλωτταις. (Strab. initio lib. 4.) This I apprehend does not affect the difference between the Gauls and the Belgæ: i. e. the Celts and Goths, which is only the object of my present inquiry. (Vid. Cluv. p. 50. 52. Pellout. vol. I. p. 180.) After all, I much doubt whether the original inhabitants of Spain were of Celtic race: There is found no resemblance between the old Cantabrian language still spoken in Biscay, and any of the Celtic dialects, viz. the Welsh, Armoric, Irish, &c. (See the Specimens subjoined to this Preface.) I am therefore inclined to follow the ancient authorities collected by Pelloutier, (in vol. I. p. 27. note.) which affirm that the Iberians were a different people from the Celts; and that from an intermixture of the two nations were produced the Celtiberians. Pelloutier seems to me to have produced no convincing proofs to the contrary, though he has laboured the point much. As for the *Aquitani*, their intercourse with the other Gauls may have brought their language to a much nearer resemblance when Strabo wrote, than it had when Cæsar resided in Gaul.

* De Bello Gallico, lib. 6. Vide locum.

† See the passage in Cæsar, lib. 6. at large, is was too long to be inserted here.

‡ *Habitus corporum varii : . . . Rutilæ Calidoniam habitantium comæ, magni artus Germanicam originem asseverant. Silurum colorati vultus, et torti plerumque crines, et positu contra Hispaniam, Iberos veteres trajecisse easque sedes occupasse fidem faciunt. Proximi Gallis et similes sunt*, &c. Tacit. in Vit. Agricolæ, c. 11.

§ *Dotem non Uxor Marito, sed Uxori Maritus offert.* De Mor. Germ. c. 18.

|| *Viri quantas pecunias ab Uxoribus* Dotis *nomine acceperunt, tantas ex suis bonis, æstimatione facta, cum dotibus communicant.* De Bello Gall. lib. 6.

was the peculiar honour of all the Gothic tribes, and which they carried with them, and planted wherever they formed settlements: On the contrary, in Gaul, all the freedom and power chiefly centered among the Druids and the chief men, whom Cæsar calls *Equites*, or Knights: But the inferior people were little better than in a state of slavery *; whereas every the meanest German was independent and free †.

But if none of these proofs of difference of Person, Manners, Institutions, or Laws, could have been produced, or should be explained away, still the difference was so great and essential between the Celtic and Teutonic nations, in regard to *Religion* and *Language*, as can never be got over, and plainly evince them to have been two distinct and different people. These two points are so strong and conclusive, that the whole proof might be left to rest upon them.

In comparing the Religious Establishment and Institutions of the Celtic tribes, with those of the Gothic or Teutonic nations, the most observable difference, and what strikes us at first sight, is, that peculiar Hierarchy, or Sacred College, among the Celts, which had the entire conduct of all their religious and even civil affairs, and served them both for magistrates and priests; viz. that of the *Druids*; which has nothing to resemble it among any of the Gothic or Teutonic nations ‡. This difference appeared to Cæsar so striking, that he sets out with this at his entrance on his description of the Germans, as a fundamental and primary distinction §. I do not here enter into a minute description of the nature of the Druids' establishment, or an enumeration of their privileges, because these may be found in Cæsar and Pliny among the ancients, and in so many authors among the moderns ||: It will be sufficient to say, that, although the Teutonic nations

* *In omni Gallia eorum hominum, qui aliquo sunt numero atque honore genera sunt duo: nam Plebs pænè Servorum habetur loco. . . . De his duobus generibus alterum est Druidum, alterum Equitum*, &c. De Bell. Gall. lib. 6.

† Tacitus de Mor. Germ. passim.

‡ Our Author, Mons. Mallet, thinks that the twelve Pontiffs, called *Dròttar*, who were assistants to Odin in administering justice, (p. 53.) were a kind of Druids; and that their name, *Drottes*, has some affinity to the Celtic word *Druid* (p. 119.): This, however, is mere fancy; there appears no more connection between the functions or offices of these two orders of men, than there is between their names: That of *Druid* being generally derived from the Greek Δρυς, or rather from the Celtic *Derw*, or *Deru*, an *Oak*, their sacred Tree (Vid. Borlace, p. 67.) whereas the words *Drottar* and *Drottes* come from the Icelandic *Drotten*, *Dominus*, Swed. *Drott*, *Heros*.

§ Germani *multum ab hâc consuetudine* [*sc.* Gallorum] *differunt: nam neque* Druides *habent, qui rebus Divinis præsint neque sacrificiis student*, &c. De Bell. Gall. lib. 6.

|| Vid. Cæsar. De Bello Gall. Comment. lib. 6. Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. 16. c. 44. Of the moderns, see Toland's Specimen of a History of the Druids, in Miscel. Works, vol. 1st. 1747. 8vo. Stukely's Stonehenge, and Abury, 2 vols. 1740. &c. folio. But especially Dr. Borlace's Antiquities of Cornwall, 2d edit. 1769. folio. This learned and ingenious writer has left nothing to be desired on the subject of the *Druids* and their institutions: He has however been drawn in by Keysler, and the other German antiquaries, to adopt their hypothesis, that the religion of the ancient Germans was, in fundamentals, the same with that of the Gauls and Britains,

nations had Priests, they bore no more resemblance to the Druids, than the Pontiffs of the Greeks and Romans, or of any other Pagan people.

Not

tains, (vid. p. 71.) As nothing that falls from so excellent a writer ought to be disregarded, I shall consider his arguments with attention. He proves the identity of the German and Gaulish Religion from the conformity of the Germans and Gauls in the following points: viz. " (1. The principal Deity of both nations was Mercury: (2.) They sacrificed human victims: (3.) They had open temples, and " (4.) no idols of human shape: (5.) They had consecrated groves: (6.) Worshipped oaks: (7.) Were fond of auspicial rites: and (8.) Computed by nights, and " not by days!"

I shall consider each of these proofs in their order: And as for the *First*, that " both nations worshipped *Mercury*:" This amounts to no more than this, that the Gauls and Britons worshipped for their chief Deity, some Celtic God, which Cæsar finding to resemble in some of his attributes the Roman *Mercury*, scrupled not to call by that Roman name: So, again, the Germans worshipped for their supreme God, a Divinity of their own, whom Tacitus likewise called *Mercury*, from a fancied resemblance to that Roman Deity, perhaps in other of his attributes We know very well, that the Supreme Deity of all the Teutonic nations was *Odin*, or *Woden*, called by the ancient Germans *Votam* and *Gotam*, or *Godam*, (vid. not. in Tac. Varior. p. 602.), who seems chiefly to have resembled the Roman Mercury in having a particular power over the ghosts of the departed (Vide Bartholin. lib. 2. c. 7. *Odinus Manium fuit Dominus: Mercurio comparandus.*) In other respects, how much they differed will appear at first sight in the *Edda*. Now if the Celtic Mercury resembled the Roman no more than Odin did, we see how unlike they might be to each other. We are not even sure that these two *Mercuries* of the Gauls and Germans agreed with the *Mercury* of the Romans in the same points of resemblance.

But (2.) " Both nations sacrificed human victims: (3.) Had open Temples; (5.) " Consecrated Groves; and (7.) were fond of auspicial rites." These descriptions I believe may be applied to all the Pagan nations in the world, during their early barbarous state. For (2.) all Pagan nations have offered human victims: Have had (3.) open temples, before they got covered ones: And, previous to their erecting magnificent domes for their religious rites, have either set up circles of rude stones, or retired under the natural shelter of (5.) solemn groves, which, upon that account, they consecrated: And (7.) all Pagan people have dealt in omens, auspices, and all the other idle superstitions of that sort. There is not one of the above circumstances but what is mentioned in Scripture, as practised by the idolatrous nations which surrounded the Jewish people, and was equally observed by some or other of the inhabitants of Italy and Greece: So that the Germans resembled the Gauls with regard to these particulars no more than they did the old idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan, Assyria, Greece, and Italy. As for the Teutonic nations, they very soon got covered temples (see below, p. 108.), and also idols of human shape (p. 110.), as had indeed the Celtic nations also in the time of Cæsar; for so Dr. Borlace himself (p. 107.) interprets that passage of his concerning the Gauls (lib. 6.) *Deum maximè Mercurium colunt: Hujus sunt* plurima simulacra. If these *simulacra* had not been images, but only rude unformed stones, Cæsar would doubtless have expressed himself with more reserve. When, therefore, Dr. Borlace says that the Gauls and Germans resembled each other in having (4.) " No " idols of human shape, he must only mean in their more early state of idolatry; which I suppose may also be predicated of every savage nation before they have attained any skill in sculpture.

But he says (6.) that both nations " worshipped Oaks." His proof, however, that the Germans had this superstition only, is, that " the *Sclavonians* (a people of " Germany) worshipped Oaks, inclosed them with a court, and fenced them in, to keep off all unhallowed access;" and for this he refers to the note in Tacit. Variorum ad c. 9. where Helmoldus has said, that the *Russians* held their groves and fountains sacred, and that the *Sclavi* worshipped *Oaks*. This proves nothing with regard to the Teutonic nations; but plainly shews that many of the Druidic superstitions had been caught up and adopted by nations no ways allied to the Celts; and therefore suggests an easy answer to the last proof that is urged of the resemblance of the Germans and Gauls in their religious rites and opinions; viz. that,

(8.) Both people " computed by nights, and not by days." This is in reality the only solid argument that has been produced. But to this the answer is very obvious

Not only in the peculiar nature of their priesthood, but in their internal doctrines, as well as outward rites, they differed.

The Druids taught, and the Celtic nations believed, the Metempsichosis, or a transmigration of the soul out of one body into another: This is so positively asserted of them by Cæsar *, who had been long conversant among them, and knew them well, that it is not in the power of any of the modern system-makers to argue and explain his words away, as they have attempted to do in every other point relating to the Celtic antiquities: However, they attempt to qualify it, by asserting that the Celtic nations believed only that the soul passed out of one human body into another, and never into that of brutes †: Which distinction I shall not now stay to examine, but proceed to observe, that all the Gothic and Teutonic nations held, on the contrary, a fixed Elizium, and a Hell; where the valiant and just were rewarded, and where the cowardly and the wicked suffered punishment. The description of these forms a great part of the Edda ‡.

In innumerable other instances, the institutions of the Druids among the Celts were extremely different from those of the Gothic nations. To mention a few: The former frequently burnt a great quantity of human victims alive, in large wicker images, as an offering to their Gods §. The Gothic nations, though, like all other Pagans, they occasionally defiled their altars with human blood, appear never to have had any custom like this.

The Druids venerated the Oak and the Misseltoe, which latter was regarded by them as the most divine and salutary of plants ||, and gathered with very particular ceremonies. In the Gothic mythology, if any tree seems to have been regarded with more particular attention than others, it is the *Ash* ¶: And as for the Misseltoe, it is represented

vious. The Teutonic nations, it is allowed, had this very peculiar arbitrary custom, which they probably borrowed from their Celtic neighbours, although of a very different race, and professing, in the main, a very different religion: For if the Sclavonian tribes, whose situation lay so much more remote from the Celts, had adopted their superstitious veneration for the Oak, which seems in no degree to have infected the Germans, it would have been wonderful indeed, if the latter, who lay contiguous to the Celts, had picked up none of their opinions or practices.

* *In primis hoc volunt persuadere, Non interire animas, sed ab aliis post mortem transire ad alios.* Lib. vi.---Vid. Diodor. Sicul. lib. v. c. 2. et Val. Max. lib. ii. c. 6. Ammian. Marcel. lib. xv.

† Vid Keysler's Antiq. Sep. p. 117. Borlace, p. 98, 99, &c.

‡ It must not be concealed, that Bartholine has produced a passage from an ancient Ode in the Edda of Sæmund Frode, which plainly shews that the doctrine of the Transmigration was not wholly unknown to the Scandinavians; but Bartholine himself speaks of it as a single instance, and it appears from the passage itself, that this opinion was considered by the Scandinavians as an idle old wife's fable. Vid. Bartholin. Causæ Contemp. a Danis Mortis, pag. 208. *Sigruna* (Helgonis Uxor) *dolore et mœstitia extincta est; Credebatur antiquitus homines iterum nasci, illud vero nunc* pro anili errore *habetur. Helgo et Sigruna iterum nati fuisse dicuntur; tunc ille Helgo Haddingica Skadi dicebatur; illa vero Kara, Halfdani filia.* It is probable, that in this one instance they only copied the doctrine of the Druids. As the Celtic nations preceded the Teutonic tribes in many of their settlements, it was probably by the former that this *anilis error antiquitus credebatur*, which was soon exploded among their Teutonic successors, whose established belief was very different.

§ Vid. Cæsar de Bello Gall. lib. vi. Borlace, p. 127.

|| See vol. II. p. 107. &c.

¶ See the Edda *passim.*

presented in the Edda rather as a contemptible and mischievous shrub *.

But what particularly distinguishes the Celtic institutions from those of the Gothic or Teutonic nations, is that remarkable air of Secrecy and Mystery with which the Druids concealed their doctrines from the laity; forbidding that they should ever be committed to writing, and upon that account not having so much as an alphabet of their own †. In this, the institutions of Odin and the Gothic Scalds was the very reverse. No barbarous people were so addicted to writing, as appears from the innumerable quantity of Runic inscriptions scattered all over the north; no barbarous people ever held Letters in higher reverence, ascribing the invention of them to their chief deity ‡, and attributing to the letters themselves supernatural virtues §. Nor is there the least room to believe that any of their doctrines were locked up or concealed from any part of the community. On the contrary, their Mythology is for ever displayed in all the Songs of their Scalds, just as that of the Greeks and Romans is in the Odes of Pindar and Horace. There never existed any institution in which there appears less of reserve and mystery than in that of the Gothic and Scandinavian people.

After all, it may possibly be true, that the Gothic nations borrowed some opinions and practices from the Celts, without being at all descended from them, or having any pretensions to be considered as the same people. The Celtic tribes were probably the first that travelled westward, and it is not impossible but that several of the Druidic observances might be caught up and imitated by the other nations that came after them ‖. Some reliques of the Druidic superstitions, we have seen (p. x. Note 6.), prevailed among the Sclavonians; and still more might be expected to be found among those of Gothic or Teutonic race, both from their nearer vicinage and greater intercourse with the Celtic nations, from whom the Sarmatians lay more remote. Nothing is more contagious than superstition; and therefore we must not wonder, if, in ages of ignorance, one wild people catch up from another, though of very different race, the most arbitrary and groundless opinions, or endeavour to imitate them in such rites and practices as they are told will recommend them to the Gods, or avert their anger.

Before I quit this subject of the Religion of the Celtic and Gothic nations, I must beg leave to observe, that the Mythology of the latter was probably, in the time of Cæsar and Tacitus, a very crude and naked

* See vol. II. p. 104, 106, &c.

† *Neque fas esse existimant ea litteris mandare; cum in reliquis fere rebus, publicis privatisque rationibus*, Græcis literis *utantur*. . , . *Neque in vulgus Disciplinam efferri velint*. Cæsar, lib. vi.

‡ Vid. infra, p. 60. 312, 313, &c.

§ Vid. infra, p. 314, 315, &c.

‖ See what has been said above, p. x. Note (8.). I know not whether we are to attribute to imitation the practice that prevailed among both people, of burying their dead under *Barrows*, or *Tumuli* (see p. 187.) This mode of sepulture, however, makes a great figure in all the old Northern Sagas or Histories, as well as in the Songs of the Scalds.

naked thing, compared to what it was afterwards, when the northern Scalds had had time to flourish and adorn it. From a very few rude and simple tenets, these wild fablers had, in the course of eight or nine centuries, invented and raised an amazing superstructure of fiction. We must not therefore suppose, that all the fables of the Edda were equally known to the Gothic nations of every age and tribe. As truth is uniform and simple, so error is most irregular and various; and it is very possible, that different fables, and different observances might prevail among the same people, in different times and countries. From their imperfect knowledge of the divine attributes, all Pagan nations are extremely apt to intermix something *local* with their idea of the Divinity, to suppose peculiar Deities presiding over certain districts, and to worship this or that God with particular rites, which were only to be observed in one certain spot. Hence, to inattentive foreigners, there might appear a difference of religion among nations who all maintained, at the bottom, one common creed; and this will account for whatever disagreement is remarked between Cæsar and Tacitus in their descriptions of the Gods of the ancient Germans: It will also account for whatever difference may appear between the imperfect relations of the Roman writers, and the full display of the Gothic mythology held forth in the Edda. It is indeed very probable, that only the mere first rudiments of the Gothic religion had begun to be formed, when the Germans were first known to the Romans: And even when the Saxons made their irruptions into Britain, though they had the same general belief concerning Odin, or Woden, Thor, and Frigga, &c. yet probably the complete system had not arrived to the full maturity it afterwards attained under the inventive hands of the Scalds.

The essential difference remarked above, between the religion of the Celtic and Gothic nations, in their Tenets, Institutions, and Worship, affords a strong proof that they were two races of men *ab origine* distinct: The same truth is proved still more strongly, if possible, by their difference in *Language;* this is an argument of fact, that amounts, in questions of this nature, almost to demonstration.

Tacitus assures us *, that the ancient British language was very little different from that spoken in Gaul; *Sermo haud multum diversus:* There was probably no more than a small difference in dialect. But that the Gaulish language widely differed from that of the Germans, appears from the whole current of history. Thus Cæsar not only asserts, in the passage above quoted (pag vii. Note ‡.), that the Gauls differed in language from the Belgæ, but plainly shews that the German and Gaulish languages were very different, when he tells us, that Ariovistus, a German prince, only learnt to speak the latter by his long residence in Gaul †. Again, Suetonius tells us, that Caligula, returning from his fruitless expedition against the Germans, in order

to

* See above, p. iv. Note †.

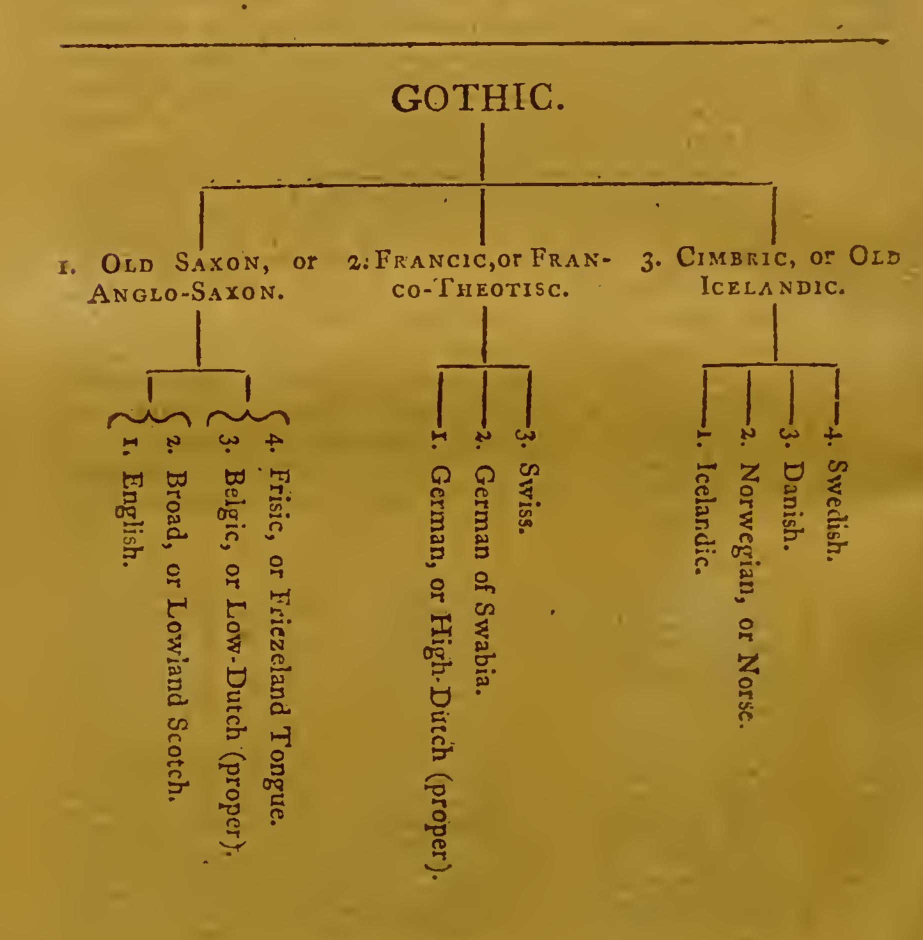
† *Qua multa jam Ariovistus longinqua consuetudine utebatur.* De Bell. Gall. lib. i. 47.

only looked for such words as bore any resemblance to that tongue; and there being, as indeed there are, very few that have any similitude, no wonder that he found so few Celtic words in a genuine Celtic language *.

I shall now proceed to lay before the Reader SPECIMENS of the GOTHIC and CELTIC Languages, properly classed and confronted with each other: Which it is apprehended, will decide this question better than any conjectural or moral reasoning.

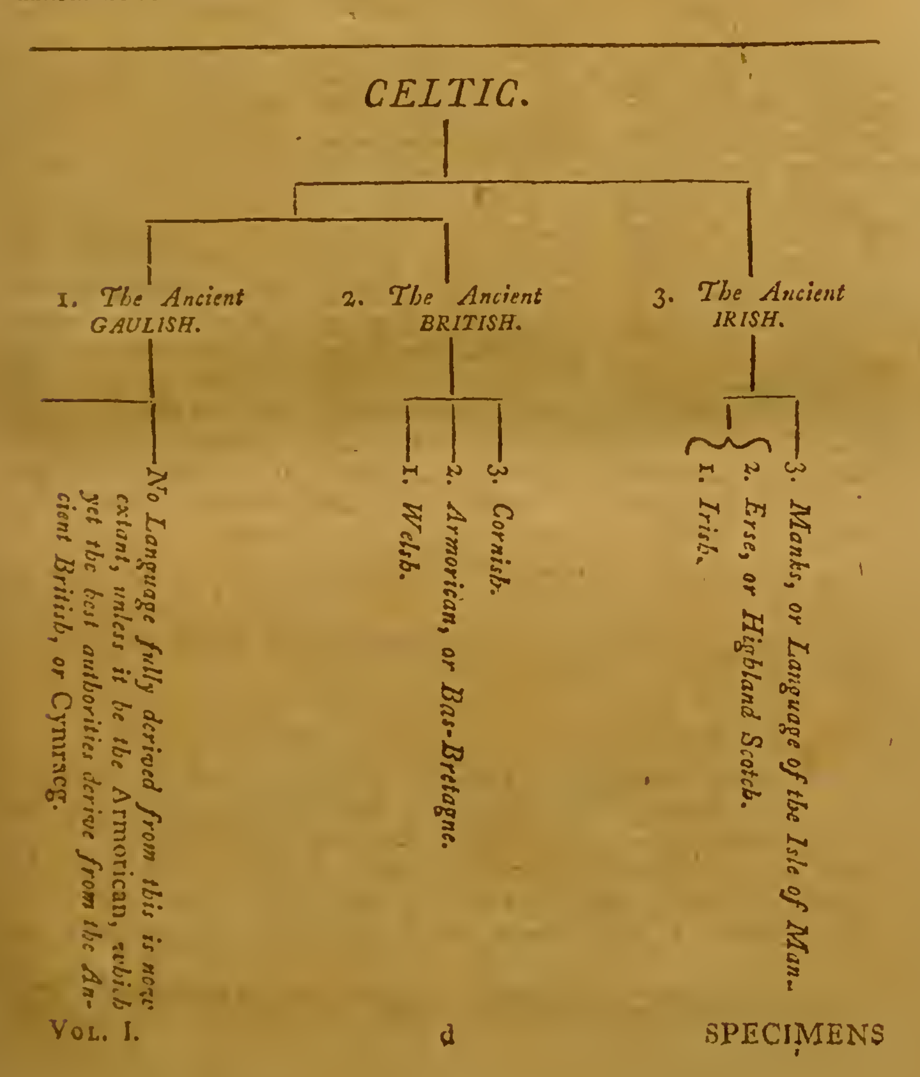
That

* It is much to be lamented, that a writer of so much learning, sagacity, and diligence as Mons. Pelloutier, should have spoiled, by one unfortunate hypothesis, so excellent a work as his *History of the Celts*, after all, certainly is. Had he not been drawn into this fundamental error, which infects his whole book; but, on the contrary, had been apprized of the radical distinction between the *Gothic* and *Celtic* antiquities; had he assigned to each people the several descriptions which occur of them in ancient history; had he pointed out the distinct features of their respective characters, and shewn in what particulars they both agreed, and wherein they differed; had he endeavoured to ascertain the limits of each people in ancient Europe,



That the SPECIMENS may be the better understood, it will be useful to give a short GENEALOGICAL TABLE, showing what particular Languages are descended from those two great Mother Tongues, by what immediate Branches they derive their descent, and what degree of affinity they severally bear to each other. This scheme of the GOTHIC Languages is copied from the Preface to Dr HICKES's *Institutiones Grammaticæ Anglo-Saxonicæ, &c. Oxon.* 1689. 4*to.*: This of the CELTIC Tongue, from the best writers I have met with on the subject.

Europe, and shewn by which of them the several countries were formerly inhabited, and from which of them the modern nations are chiefly descended; he would then have performed a noble task, and have deserved equally well of the past and future ages: His book, instead of being a perpetual source of mistake and confusion, would then have served as a clue to guide us through the labyrinth of ancient history, and he would have raised a noble monument to the memory alike of the *Celts* and *Goths*, from one or other of which ancient people so many great nations are descended.



SPECIMENS OF THE GOTHIC LANGUAGES.

our Debts as we forgive our Debtors. 6. And lead us not into Temptation. 7. But deliver us from Evil. Amen.

[From the English Testament.]

we forgien urc Debtouris. 6. And leid uss na' into Temptation. 7. Bot deliver uss frae Evil. Amen.

[From a Scotch Gentleman.]

III.

Low-Dutch, or Belgic.

Onse Vader die daer zijt in de Hemelen. 1. Uwen Naem worde gheheylight. 2. U Rijcke kome. 3. Uwen Wille gheschiede op der Aerden, gelijck in den Hemel. 4. Onse dagelijckt Broodt gheeft ons heden. 5. Ende vergheeft ons onse Schulden, ghelijck wy oock onse Schuldenaren vergeven. 6. Endo en leyt ons niet in Versoeckinge. 7. Maer verlost ons vanden Boosen. Amen.

[From the New Test. in Dutch, Amst. 1630. 12mo.]

IV.

Frisic, or Friezeland Tongue.

Ws Haita duu derstu biste yne Hymil. 1. Dyn Name wird heiligt. 2. Dyn Rick tokomme. 3. Dyn Wille moet schoen, opt Yrtryck as yne Hymile. 4. Ws deilix Bræ jov ws jwed. 5. In verjou ws, ws Schylden, as wy vejac ws Schyldnirs. 6. In lied ws nact in Versieking. 7. Din fry ws vin it Quæd. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn; p. 68.]

II. Modern Languages derived from the Ancient German, or Francic, &c.

I.

High-Dutch (proper).

Unser Vater in dem Himmel. 1. Dein Name werde geheiliget. 2. Dein Reich komme. 3. Dein Wille geschehe auf Erden, wie im Himmel. 4. Unser taeglich Brodt gib uns heute. 5. Und vergib uns unsere Schulden, wie wir unsern Schuldigern vergeben. 6. Und fuehre uns nicht in Versuchung. 7. Sondern erloese uns von dem Vbel. Amen.

[From the common German New Testament, printed at London. 12mo.]

II.

High-Dutch of the Suevian Dialect.

Fatter ausar dear du bischt em Hemmal. 1. Gehoyliget wearde dain Nam. 2. Zuakomme dain Reych. 3. Dain Will gschea uff Earda as em Hemmal. 4. Ausar deglich Braud gib as huyt. 5. Und fergiab as ausre Schulda, wia wiar fergeaba ausarn Schuldigearn. 6. Und fuar as net ind Fersuaching. 7. Sondern erlais as fom Ibal. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn's Oratio Dominica, p. 64.]

III.

The Swiss Language.

Vatter unser, der du bist in Himlen. 1. Geheylight werd dyn Nam.

ledwyr. 6. *Ag nag arwain ni i Brofedigaeth.* 7. *Eithr gwared ni rhag Drwg. Amen.*

[Communicated by a Gentleman of Jesus College Oxon.]

II.

ARMORIC, or Language of Brittany in France.

Hon Tad, pehudij sou en Esaou. 1 *Da Hanou bezet sanctifiet.* 2. *Devet aornomp da rouantelaez.* 3. *Da eol bezet graet en Douar, eual maz eon en Euf.* 4. *Ró dimp byziou hon Bara pemdeziec.* 5. *Pardon dimp hon pechedou, eual ma pardonomp da nep pegant ezomp offanczet.* 6. *Ha na dilaes quet a hanomp en Temptation.* 7. *Hoguen hon diliur diouz Drouc. Amen.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 51.]

III.

CORNISH.

Ny Taz, ez yn Neau. 1. *Bonegas yw tha Hanaw.* 2. *Tha bonagath bogweez en nore pocoragen Neau.* 4. *Roe thenyen dythma gon dyth Bara givians.* 5. *Ny gan rahn weery cara ny givians mens.* 6. *O cabin ledia ny nara idn Tentation.* 7. *Buz dilver ny thart Doeg. Amen.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 50.]

III. MODERN LANGUAGES derived from the ANCIENT IRISH.

I.

IRISH, or GAIDHLIG.

Ar nathair atá ar Neamh. 1. *Naomhthar Hainm.* 2. *Tigeadh do Rioghachd.* 3. *Deuntar do Thoil ar an Ttalámh, mar do nithear ar Neamh.* 4. *Ar narân laéathamhail tabhair dhúinn ar Bhfiacha, mar mhaithmidne dar bhféitheamhnuibh fein.* 6. *Agus na léig sinn a ccathughadh.* 7. *Achd sáor sinn ó Olc. Amen.*

[From Bishop Bedel's Irish Bible, Lond. 1690. 8vo.]

II.

ERSE, or GAIDHLIG ALBANNAICH.

Ar n' Athair ata air Neamh. 1. *Gu naomhaichear t Ainm.* 2. *Tigeadh do Rioghachd.* 3. *Deanthar do Thoil air an Talamh mar a nithear air Neamh.* 4. *Tabhair dhuinn an diu ar n Aran laitheil.* 5. *Agus maith dhuinn ar Fiacha amhuil mar mhaithmid d'ar luchd-fiachaibh**. 6. *Agus na leig am buaireadh sinn.* 7. *Ach saor sinn o Olc. Amen.*

* Feichneinibh.

[From the New Testament in the Erse Language, printed at Edinburgh, 1767, 8vo. Mat. vi. 9.]

III.

MANKS, or Language of the ISLE of MANN.

Ayr ain, t'ayns Niau; 1. *Casherickdy row dt' Ennym.* 2. *Dy jig dty Ree*

2. Zukumm uns dijn Rijch. 3. Dyn Will geschahe, wie im Himmel, also auch uff Erden. 4. Gib uns hut unser taglich Brot. 5. Und vergib uns unsere Schulden, wie auch wir vergaben unsern Schuldneren. 6. Und fuhr uns nicht in Versuchnyss. 7. Sunder erlos uns von dem Bosen. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 65.

III. Modern Languages derived from the Ancient Scandinavian, or Icelandic, called (by some Writers) Cimbric, or Cimbro-Gothic.

I.

Icelandic.

Fader vor thu som ert a Himnum. 1. Helgest thitt Nafn. 2. Tilkome thitt Riike. 3. Verde thinn Vilie, so a Jordu, sem a Himne. 4. Gieff thu oss i dag vort daglegt Braud. 5. Og fiergieff oss vorar Skulder, so sem vier fierergiefum vorum Skuldinautum. 6. Og inleid oss ecke i Freistne. 7. Heldr frelsa thu oss fra Illu. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 70.]

II.

Norwegian, or Norse.

Wor Fader du som est y Himmelen. 1. Gehailiget worde dit Nafn. 2. Tilkomma os Riga dit. 3. Din Wilia geskia paa Iorden, som handt er udi Himmelen. 4. Giff os y Tag wort dagliga Brouta. 5. Och forlaet os wort Skioldt, som wy forlata wora Skioldon. 6. Och lad os icke homma voi Fristelse. 7. Man frals os fra Onet. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 71.]

III.

Danish.

Vor Fader i Himmelen. 1. Helligt vorde dit Navn. 2. Tilkomme dit Rige. 3. Vorde din Villie, paa Iorden som i Himmelen. 4. Giff oss i Dag vort daglige Bred. 5. Oc forlad oss vor Skyld, som wi forlade vore Skyldener. 6. Oc leede oss icke i Fristelse. 7. Men frels os fra Ont. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 70.]

IV.

Swedish.

Fader war som ast i Himmelen. 1. Helgat warde titt Nampn. 2. Till-komme tit Ricke. 3. Skei tin Wilie saa paa Iordenne, som i Himmelen. 4. Wart dagliga Brod giff oss i Dagh. 5. Och forlat oss wara Skulder sa som ock wi forlaten them oss Skildege aro. 6. Och inleed oss icke i Frestelse. 7. Ut an frals oss i fra Ondo. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn p. 70.]

SPECIMENS OF THE CELTIC LANGUAGES.

riaght. 3. *Dt'aigney dy row jeant er y Thalao, myr te ayns Niau.* 4. *Cur dooin nyn Arran jeu as gagblaa.* 5. *As leib dooin nyn logbtyn, myr ta sbin leib dauesyn ta jannoo logbtyn nyn' oc.* 6. *As ny leeid sbin ayns miolagb.* 7. *Agb livrey sbin veib Olk. Amen.*

[From the Liturgy in Manks, printed at London, 1765. 8vo.]

SPECIMENS OF THE FINN AND LAPLAND TONGUES.

I.

The Finn Language.

Isa meidan joca olet taiwassa. 1. *Pybitetty olcon sinum Nimes.* 2. *Labes tulcon sinum Waldacundas.* 3. *Olcon sinun tabtos niin maasa cuin taiwasa.* 4. *Anna meile tanapaiwana meidan joca paiwatnen leipam.* 5. *Sa anna meille meidan syndim andexi nuncuin mekin andex annam meidan welwottistem.* 6. *Ja ala jobdata meita kiusauxen.* 7. *Mutta paasta meita pabasta. Amen.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 82,]

II.

The Lapland Tongue.

Atki mijam juco lee almensisne 1. *Ailis ziaddai tu Nam.* 2. *Zweigubatta tu Ryki.* 3. *Ziaddus tu Willio naukuchte almesne nau ei edna mannal.* 4. *Wadde mijai udni mijan fært pæfwen laibebm.* 5. *Jab andagasloite mi jemijan suddoid, naukucbte mije andagasloitebt kudi mije welgogas lien.* 6. *Jab sissalaidi mijabni.* 7. *Æle tocko kæckzællebma pabast. Amen.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 83.]

A SPECIMEN OF THE CANTABRIAN OR BISCAYAN LANGUAGE, STILL PRESERVED IN SPAIN.

The Basque.

Gure Aita keruétan caréña. 1. *Erabilbedi sainduqui çure Icena.* 2. *Ethorbedi çure Erressuma.* 3. *Eguinbedi çure Borondatea çeru' an becala turre' an ore.* 4. *Emandieçgaucu egun gure egunorozco oguia.* 5. *Eta barkbadietcatgutçu gure çorraç gucere gure cardunei barkbatcendiotçaguten becala.* 6. *Eta ezgaitçatcu utc tentacionétan erortcerat.* 7. *Aitcitic beguiragaitcatçu gaitc gucietaric. Halabez.*

[From Chamberlayn, p, 44.]

REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING VERSIONS: AND FIRST OF THE GOTHIC SPECIMENS.

THE great and uniform similitude discoverable at first sight between all the Specimens of the Gothic or Teutonic Languages, must be very striking, even to foreigners unacquainted with these Tongues: But to those that know them intimately, the affinity must appear much nearer and stronger; because many words that were originally the same, are disguised by the variations of Pronunciation and Orthography, as well as by the difference of Idiom: Thus, the German *Geheiliget*, and the English *Hallowed*, are both equally derived from the Teutonic *Helig*, Holy.

It may further be observed, that Time has introduced a change, not only in the Form, but in the meaning of many words; so that though they are equally preserved in the different Dialects, they no longer retain the same uniform appearance, nor can be used with propriety to express the same exact meaning. Thus, the Latin word *Panis* is translated in the Gothic and Anglo-Saxon *Hlaf*, or *Hlaif*, which word is still current among us in its derivative *Loaf*, but with a variation of sense that made it less proper to be used in the Pater-noster than the other Teutonic word *Bread*, which is preserved in all the other Dialects, but in a great variety of Forms. Thus, from the old Francic *Brot*, or Cimbric *Brodh*, come the Swiss *Brot*, the Swedish *Brod*, the High and Low Dutch *Broodt*, the Norse *Brauta*, the Icelandic *Braud*, the English *Bread*, the Scottish *Breid*, the Danish *Bred*, and the Frisic *Bræ*.

Again, it is possible, that in many of these languages there was more than one word to exprefs the same idea; and if there was a variety, then the different translators, by using some of them one word, and the rest another, have introduced a greater difference into their versions than really subsisted in their several languages. Of this kind I esteem the word *Atta*, (*Pater*), used by Ulphilas, whose countrymen had probably another word of the same origin as *Fader*, or *Father*, as well as all the other Gothic nations: So, again, the Anglo-Saxons (besides their word *Hlaf*) had probably another term, whence we derived our present word *Bread*. As for the Gothic word *Atta* (whence the Frisic *Haita*, and perhaps the Lapland *Atki*), however Ulphilas came by it, it seems evidently of the same origin as the old Cantabrian *Aita*.

Lastly, a great difference will appear to Foreigners from the different arrangement of the same words, but more especially from the difference of Translation; for the Pater-noster has not been rendered in the several versions in the same uniform manner. Thus, in the High Dutch and Danish, the first sentence is expressed contractedly, *Noster Pater in Cœlis*. In the Gothic of Ulphilas, *Pater Noster tu in*

Cælis. In the others more at large, *Pater Noster tu es in Cælis*, or *Noster Pater qui es in Cælis*, &c. &c. And what is still more remarkable in the Anglo-Saxon, the fourth petition is rendered, not *panem nostrum quotidianum*, but *panem nostrum supernaturalem*, as it was interpreted also by some of the ancient Fathers.

But to confirm the foregoing remarks by one general illustration, I shall confront the HIGH DUTCH Specimen with a literal ENGLISH version, which will support the assertion made above (p. 14.), that these two languages still prove their affinity, notwithstanding the different mediums through which they have descended, and the many ages that have elapsed since their separation.

GERMAN.	ENGLISH.
Unsar	Our [Ure, *Northern Dialect* *]
Vater	Father [Vather, Vader, *Somersetshire Dialect*]
in dem Himmel.	in the Heaven [in them Heavens, *vulgar Dialect.*]
1. Dein Name	1. Thine Name
werde geheiliget.	were [may it be] hallowed.
2. Dein Reich	2. Thine [Kingdom †]
komme.	come.
3. Dein Wille	3. Thine Will
geschehe	so be
auf Erden,	of [in] Earth,
wie in Himmel.	as in Heaven.
4. Unsar taeglich Brodt	4. Our daily Bread
gib uns	give us
heute ‡.	[this Day].
5. Und vergib	5. And forgive [vorgive, *Somersetshire Dialect*]
uns unsere	us our
Schulden,	[Debts, *Debita*, Lat.]
wie wir unsern	as we our [ou'rn, *rustic Dialect.*]
Schuldigern	[Debtors, *Debitores*, Lat.]
vergeben.	forgive. [vorgiven, *Somersetshire Dialect.*]

6. Und

* This is evidently a contraction of *Unsar*, antiqu. *Unser*, sc. U'er, Ure. In our midland counties, *Our* is pronounced *Wor* or *Wer*, like the Swedish or Norse.

The Swiss, and some of the other German Dialects, give the first sentence more fully, thus, *Du bist in Himlen*: This is literally the same with our vulgar phrase, *Thou beest*, or *bist in Heaven*.

† The old Teutonic word *Rick* is still preserved in the termination of our English *Bishop-rick*; and even *King-rike*, for *Kingdome*, was in use among our countrymen so late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth: Thus, in the famous libel of *Stubs*, intitled, "The Discoverie of a gaping Gulf, whereinto England is like to be swallowed by "another French Marriage," &c. printed Anno 1579. small 8vo. (Sign. C. 7. b.) The author talks of the Queen's "having the Kingrike in her own person;" meaning the regal dominion, authority, &c.' See also Verstigan's Antiquities, Lond. 1634. p. 215.

‡ Perhaps from the Lat. *hodie*.

6. Und fuehre	6. And [lead]
uns nicht in	us not in [into]
Versuchung.	[Temptation, Lat.]
7. Sondern	7. But
erloese uns	loose [deliver, French] us
von dem Ubel.	from the Evil.

Before I quit this subject of the GOTHIC or TEUTONIC Languages, I must observe, that the old Scandinavian Tongue is commonly called CIMBRIC, or CIMBRO-GOTHIC, as it was the dialect that chiefly prevailed among the Gothic tribes who inhabited the *Cimbrica Chersonesus*, &c. But whether the ancient CIMBRI, and their confederates the TEUTONES, who made the irruption into the Roman empire in the time of Marius *, were a CELTIC or a GOTHIC people, may perhaps admit of some disquisition.

They who contend that they were CELTS, may urge the resemblance of the name of *Cimbri* to that of *Cymri*, by which the Britons have always called themselves in their own language: They may also produce the authority of Appian, who expressly calls the *Cimbri* CELTS; as well as of several of the Roman authors, who scruple not to name them GAULS †. It may further be observed in favour of this opinion, that the emigration of so large a body of the old Celtic inhabitants, would facilitate the invasion of the Gothic tribes who succeeded them in these northern settlements, and will account for the rapid conquests of Odin and his Asiatic followers: It might also be conjectured, that the small scattered remains of these old Celtic Cimbri were the Savage Men who lurked up and down in the forests and mountains, as described by the ancient Icelandic Historians ‡, and who, in their size and ferocity, so well correspond with the descriptions given us of their countrymen that invaded the Roman empire. Thus far such an opinion is equally consistent both with the Roman and Northern historians.

On the other hand, that the *Cimbri* of Marius were not a Celtic, but a German or a Gothic people, is an opinion that may be supported with no slight arguments. On this head it may be observed, with our Author, Mons. Mallet, "that the ancients generally considered this "people as a branch of the Germans §," and that their tall stature and general character rather corresponds with the description of the Germans than of the Celts: That as for the name of *Cimbri* or *Cimber*, it is resolvable into a word in the German Language which signifies WARRIOR or WARLIKE ‖: And that the authorities of the Roman Historians

* Described below, in Chap. II.

† "Appianus *in Illyricis* Cimbros *Celtas*, addito *quos Cimbros vocant*, appellavit. "Et evolve *Florum*, *Lib. III. cap.* 3. Salustium *Bell. Jugurth. in fine*. Rufum *Brev.* "*Cap. VI.* qui omnes *Cimbros* diserté *Gallos*, et *ab extremis Galliæ* profugos, nomi- "narunt." Speneri Notitia Germaniæ Antiquæ. Hal. Magd. 1717. 4to. p. 123.

‡ See below, p. 31, &c.

§ See below, p. 21.

‖ *Germanis quidem* Camp *exercitum aut locum ubi exercitus castra metatur, significat; inde ipsis vir castrensis et militaris* Kemffer *et* Kempher *et* Kemper *et* Kimber, *et* Kamper,

Historians cannot much be depended on, because (as has been before observed *) they were seldom exact in the names they gave to the barbarous nations. It may further be urged, that the facility with which the Cimbri made their way through Germany into Gaul, renders it probable that they were rather a branch of the German people, than of a race at constant enmity with them, like the Celts, and who, upon that account, would have been opposed in their passage; especially as the Germans appear in these countries rather to have prevailed over the Celts, and to have forced them westward, driving them out of many of their settlements. But lastly, if the Cimbri had been a Celtic people, then such of them as were left behind in their own country, and were afterwards swallowed up among the succeeding Gothic tribes who invaded Scandinavia, would have given a tincture of their Celtic language to that branch of the Teutonic which was spoke in these countries: Or, at least, we should have found more Celtic names of mountains, rivers, &c. in the Cimbric Chersonese, than in other Gothic settlements: But I do not find that either of these is the case; the old Icelandic seems to be as free from any Celtic mixture, as any other Gothic dialect; nor is there any remarkable prevalence of Celtic names in the peninsula of Jutland, more than in any part of Germany, where, I believe, its former Celtic inhabitants have up and down left behind them a few names of places, chiefly of natural situations, as of rivers, mountains, &c. This, at least, is the case in England; where, although the Britons were so intirely extirpated, that scarce a single word of the Welsh language was admitted by the Saxons, and although the names of towns and villages are almost universally of Anglo-Saxon derivation, yet the hills, forests, rivers, &c. have generally retained their old Celtic names †.

But whether the old *Cimbri* were Celts or Goths, yet, forasmuch as from the time of Odin, both the Cimbrica Chersonesus, and all the neighbouring regions were become entirely Gothic settlements, the Gothic dialect which prevailed in these countries is called by antiquaries *Cimbric*, and *Cimbro-Gothic*: It is also sometimes termed Old *Iceland*, because many of the best writers in it came from Iceland, and because

Kamper, *pro varietate dialectorum vocatur; vocabulum hoc nostro [sc. Anglico] Sermone nondum penitus exolevit; Norfolciences enim plebeio et proletario sermone dicunt* "He is a Kemper Old Man," *i. e, Senex vegetus est.* Sheringham, p. 57. See also *Kemperye Man*, in the Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, Vol. I. p. 70.

Sheringham afterwards adds, *Illud autem hoc loco omittendum non est*, Cimbros *quoque à proceritate corporis hoc nomen habere potuisse* . . . Kimber *enim aliâ significatione hominem giganteâ corporis mole præditum designat.* "*Danico hodie idiomate,* "(inquit Pontanus, in additam. ad Hist. Dan. lib. I.) Kimber *sive* Kempe *et* Kemper *non bellatorem tantum, sed proprie Gigantem notat.*" Sheringh. p. 58. From hence it should seem, that a gigantic person was called *Kimber*, from his resemblance to the ancient *Cimbri*; rather than that this people were called *Cimbri* from their gigantic size; so that this favours the opinion that the Cimbri were a different race from the ancient Danes, &c. because no nation would think of calling themselves giants; for if they were all uniformly gigantic, there would appear to themselves nothing remarkable in their size; whereas this would strike another people as a primary and leading distinction.

* See p. iv.

† See *Penigent*, *Arden*, *Avon*, &c. in Camden's Britannia, and that author *passim*.

because the Cimbric has been more perfectly preserved in that island than in any other settlement. To the old original mother tongue of all the Gothic dialects, it has been usual (after Verstegan *) to give the name of *Teutonic*, not so much from the Teutones, or *Teutoni*, who inhabited the Danish islands, and were brethren to the *Cimbri*, as from its being the ancient Tuytsh, the language of Tuisto † and his votaries, the great Father and Deity of the German tribes.

To conclude this subject, whoever would trace the several *Teutonic* languages up to their source, and proceed upon sure and solid principles in inquiries of this kind, need only have recourse to that great and admirable work, *LINGUARUM Vett. Septentrionalium THESAURUS Grammatico-Criticus et Archæologicus, Autore GEORGIO HICKES, S. T. P. Oxon.* 1705. 2 vols. folio.

* Restitution of decayed Intelligence. 4to. *passim.* See also Speneri Notit. Antiq. Germ. L. 4. p. 104.

† *Celebrant Carminibus antiquis (quod unum apud illos.* sc. Germanos, *memoria et annalium genus est)* Tuistonem *Deum, Terrâ editum, et filium* Mannum *originem gentis, conditoresque.* Tacit. de Mor. German. This *Mannus* is evidently *Man*, the offspring of *Tuisto*, the supreme Deity.

OF THE CELTIC SPECIMENS.

AS the strong resemblance of the several Gothic Specimens to each other, so their radical dissimilitude to those of Celtic origin must appear decisive of the great question discussed in the foregoing Preface. Had these two languages ever had any pretensions to be considered as congenial, the further we traced them back, the stronger would be the resemblance between them; but the most ancient Specimens appear as utterly dissimilar as the most modern; not but here and there a word may have been accidentally caught up on either side: viz. borrowed by the Goths from the Celtic language, and *vice versâ;* or perhaps adopted by each of them from some third language radically different from them both. Thus, from the Welsh *Tâd*, our vulgar have got the common word *Dad* and *Daddy*; and from the French *Delivre* are derived both the English *Deliver*, and the Armoric *Diluir*, whence the Cornish *Dilver*.

In conformity to the opinion of the most knowing antiquaries, I have given the *Irish* and *Erse* Tongues as descended from one common original with the *Cambrian*, or ancient *British* languages, viz. the *Welsh*, *Armoric*, and *Cornish*. But, to confess my own opinion, I cannot think they are equally derived from one common *Celtic* stock; at least not in the same uniform manner as any two branches of the *Gothic;* such, for instance, as the *Anglo-Saxon* and *Francic* from the Old Teutonic. Upon comparing the two ancient Specimens given above in page xix. scarce any resemblance appears between them; so that if the learned will have them to be streams from one common fountain, it must be allowed, that one or both of them have been greatly

greatly polluted in their course, and received large inlets from some other channel.

But, notwithstanding this apparent dissimilitude, the celebrated Lluyd, and others who have investigated this subject, firmly maintain, that there is a real affinity between the Irish and Cambrian tongues, and that a great part of both languages is radically the same. He has further shewn, that many names of places in South-Britain, and even in Wales itself, the meaning of which is lost in the Welsh language, can only be explained from words now extant in the Irish and Erse tongues: An incontestible proof, eirther that the Irish or Erse language originally prevailed all over the southern parts of this Island, or that it is of congenial origin with the Cambrian or Welsh, and so has preserved many words, which are now lost in the other *.

Indeed a good reason may be assigned why the several branches of the Old Celtic differ to the eye so much more than the derivatives of any other language. viz. In the Celtic tongue words are declined by changing, NOT the Terminations, but the Initial Letters in the oblique cases, or by prefixing an article with an apostrophe (either expressed or implied); so that those who are ignorant of this language are apt to confound the radical Letters with such as are merely superadded and accidental, or to think two words utterly dissimilar, that are only made so by an occasional prefix, or a variety of declension: To give one instance (out of innumerable) of the latter kind, the British word *Pen*, in construction, regularly assumes the form of *Ben*, *Phen*, and *Mhen*. e.g.

> *Pen*, a Head.
> *Pen gûr*, a Man's Head.
> *i Ben*, his Head.
> *i Phen*, her Head.
> *y'm Mhen*, my Head.

Before I conclude these slight Remarks, I must beg leave to observe, that as the great subject of this present book is *Gothic Antiquities*, which I apprehend to be totally distinct from the *Celtic*, I only pretend to be exact

* *Lluyd* thinks both these causes have concurred: viz. 1. That the ancestors of the Irish and Highland Scots, sc. the ancient *Guydhelians*, were the old original Celts, who first inhabited this island; and that the *Cymri*, or Welsh, were another and different race of Celts (a branch of the Celtic *Cimbri*) who succeeded the other, and drove them northwards. II. That the language of both these people, though originally the same, had descended down through different channels, and was rendered still more widely distant, 1. By the additional mixture of Cantabrian words imported into Ireland by the Scots, who came from Spain and settled among the old Guydelian Celts from Britain: And, 2. By the changes the Cymraeg or Welsh language suffered during the subjection of 500 years to the Romans, &c. (See Lluyd's *Welsh* and *Irish* Prefaces, translated in the Appendix to Nicholson's *Irish Historical Library*, &c. 1736. folio.)

See also *Maitland's* "History of Scotland, 2 vols. folio." who has some things curious on this subject, particularly on the passage of the *Cimbri* into Britain; but the generality of his book shews a judgment so warped by national prejudice, is so evidently designed to support a favourite hypothesis, and is writ with such a spirit of coarse invective, that the Reader will be constantly led to suspect that his quotations are unfair, and his arguments fallacious. To mention only one instance of this writer's strange perversion of history, he sets out with denying, in the teeth of Cæsar and all the ancients, that the *Old Britons were ever painted!*

exact and precise as to the *Gothic* or *Teutonic* languages; but do not take upon me to decide on any of the points which relate either to the *Celtic* Antiquities, or *Celtic* Tongues. For this reason I avoid entering into the dispute, which has of late so much interested our countrymen in North-Britain: viz. Whether the *Erse* language was first spoken in Scotland or Ireland. Before the inquisitive reader adopts either opinion, he would do well to consider many curious hints, which are scattered up and down in *Lluyd's* most excellent *Archæologia Britannica*, 1707. fol. and especially in his *Welsh* and *Irish* Prefaces, referred to in the foregoing Note.

The Specimen of the *Erse*, or *Highland Scottish*, in p. xxi. is extracted from the New Testament lately published at Edinburgh, wherein this language is called *Gaidhlig Albannaich*; and upon the authority of that book I have so named it here. This I mention by way of caveat against the censure of those who contend that the true name is *Gaelic*, or *Galic*, and that this word is the same with *Gallic*, the name of the ancient language of *Gaul*. Without deciding the question as to the origin of the *Erse* language itself, I must observe upon the ancient name of *Gallic*, that this does not seem to have been used by the natives of *Gaul* themselves, but to have been given them by foreigners: They called themselves *Celtæ*, and their language *Celtic* *; in like manner as the inhabitants of Wales, though called *Welsh* by us, term themselves CYMRU, and their own language *Cymraeg*; who at the same time call us *Saissons*, and our tongue *Saissonaeg*, thus reminding us of our Saxon origin.

* *Qui ipsorum lingua* Celtæ, *nostra* Galli *appellantur.* Cæsar de Bello Gall. L. 1. " Celtæ, *the Gauls*, Gædil, Cadil, or Keil, and in the plural, according to our dia- " lect, Keiliet, or Keilt, (now Guidhelod) *Irishmen.* The word *Keilt* could not be " otherwise written by the Romans than *Ceilte* or *Celtæ.*" See Lluyd's Irish Preface, p. 107. in Nicholson's Irish Historian.
In the same place the reader will find many of the ancient names of offices, persons, &c. mentioned by Cæsar as prevailing in Gaul, explained from the modern Irish language, as *Allobrox*, *Divitiacus*, *Vercingetorix*, *Vergasillaunus*, *Vergobretus*, &c.

OF THE FINN AND LAPLAND SPECIMENS: AND OF THE CANTABRIAN, OR BASQUE.

THE two former of these are subjoined, in order to illustrate what our Author has said below, in p. 33, 34.

Of the *Finn* language it may be observed, that it appears quite original, and underived from any other tongue with which we are acquainted. But as to that of the *Laplanders*, it is apparently a derivative from several others: Many of the words are evidently borrowed from the *Finn* language, and others from the *Norse*, mixed, it may be, with derivatives from the *Greenland* tongue, or perhaps the *Sclavonic*. From the *Finn* language are apparently borrowed these words in the

Pater-noster, viz. *Mijam, juco, laibebm, pabast,* &c. and these from the *Norse*, or some sister dialect, viz *Nam, Ryki, Willio,* &c.

As to the *Cantabrian*, or *Basque*, it has no apparent affinity with any dialect either of the *Teutonic* or *Celtic* languages. Yet *Lhuyd* has given a list of derivatives from this language which are still extant in the *Irish* tongue, and which confirm the opinion, that an ancient colony from Spain actually intermixed among the original inhabitants of *Ireland*.

To this excellent writer, so often quoted, I refer all such as would proceed on sure and solid grounds in their inquiries concerning the *Celtic Language* and *Antiquities*: A subject which has proved the great stumbling-block of modern antiquaries and etymologists, and which has occasioned so many wild, absurd, and childish publications, to the disgrace of all etymology, and scandal of literature. Instead of imitating the caution, diffidence, and modesty of *Lhuyd*, who spent several years in travelling and residing among the different branches of the *Celts*, these writers make up a jargon of their own, which they call *Celtic*, and, without knowing any one of the ancient languages truly, set out confidently to explain them all.

That I may not appear invidious, I will not produce instances of the dotage and folly of some of our countrymen in what they call Celtic Etymologies and Illustrations of Celtic Antiquities, but will refer the reader to a work of a superior class, the celebrated *Memoires de la Langue Celtique, par* M Bullet. *Besançon*, 1754. 3 vols. folio. This learned, and, in other respects, ingenious writer, is a glaring instance how much a good judgment may be drawn away by a darling hypothesis, and is a warning to others not to write upon subjects they do not understand: For, having little or no acquaintance with the English language, he undertakes to explain, from his own imaginary Celtic Vocabulary, the names of innumerable places in England, in what he calls a *Description Etymologique* *: Where, if he had confined himself to some of our rivers, mountains, and forests, he had stood some chance of being right, since many of these retain their old British names: But when he boldly proceeds to our names of villages and towns, which are most of them purely Saxon and English, he falls into such diverting blunders as these, viz.

Acton (which is from the Saxon *Ac*, an Oak, and *Ton*, a Town) he derives from *Ac*, a River, and *Ton*, Habitation.

Aston (which is merely *East-town*, as in some parts of England *Easter* is still called *Aster*) he will have from *Ac*, River, and *Ton*, Habitation.

Aukland (which is probably old English for *Oak-land*) he fetches from *Oc*, a little Hill, *Lan*, River, and *D*, from *Dy*, Two.

Colbroke,

* *Une Description Etymologique des villes, rivieres, montagnes, forêts, curiosités naturelles des Gaules; de la meilleure partie del' Espagne et de l' Italie; de la Grande Bretagne, dont les Gaulois ont été les premiers habitans.* This writer has, however, some things very ingenious and solid.

Colbroke, he says, comes from the Saxon *Broke*, a Bridge; i. e. a Bridge over th Colne.

Dich-Marsh, he derives from *Dich*, (which he says is from *Dichlud*, Borne), and *Mar*, Water. *Dichmar*, Land borne up by Water.

Hanwe l, he says, is from *Han*, a Bending, and *Val*, in composition *Vel*, a River.

Higham (a borough in Nor hamptenshire, which stands on a hill, at some distance from any river, and which was doubtless named, from its el vated situation, *High-ham*; i.e. the Home, or Habitation on High Ground: See Verstigan.) this writer derives from *J*, a River, and *Cam*, in composition *Gam*, a Bending.

Northampton, (either so named in contradistinction to *South-hampton*, or, according to Camden, originally *North-avonton)*, this egregious etymologist derives from *Nor (Embouchure)*, the Mouth of a River, *Tan*, a River, and *Ton*, Habitation.

Northill, (which I suppose is merely North-Hill), he derives from *Nor*, River, and *Tyle*, Habitation.

Oundale (contracted for Avon-dale) he derives from *Avon*, a River, and *Dal*, inclosed, surrounded.

Ringwood (i. e. I suppose, a " Wood ring-fenced," a common forest term) he derives from *Ren (Partage)*, a Division, *Cw*, River, and *Hed*, a Forest.

Stanford (i.e. Stone, or Stonyford (he derives from *Stan (Embouchure)*, a Mouth of a River, *Vor*, pronounced *For*, Near.

Stratton (i. e. Street-town, the name of a Town on the Watling-street), from *Strat*, Land near a River, and *Ton*, Habitation: Or, from *Ster*, Rivers, *At*, Junction or Joining, and *Ton*, Habitation.

Uxbridge (supposed by some to be corrupted from Ouse-bridge) he derives from *Uc*, River, and *Brig (Partage)*, Division.

Such are the derivations of a writer who sets out to explain the meaning of English names of places, without understanding the signification of our common English words, *Land*, *Brook*, *Marsh*, *Well*, *High*, *North*, *Hill*, *Dale*, *Wood*, *Ford*, *Street*, or *Bridge!*

So much for Celtic Etymologies!

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

TO the modern tongues derived from the Old *Cimbro-Gothic* above mentioned in p. xxii. may be added a Specimen of the Language spoken by the common people in the Isles of Orkney. This is preserved by Dr Wallace, in his ACCOUNT of those Islands, " Lond. 1700. 8vo." Who tells us it is called by the natives *Norns*. It seems to be a corruption of the *Norse*, Icelandic, &c. and is as follows:

" Favor i ir i Chimrie. 1. Helleur ir i Nam thite. 2. Gilla cos-
" dum thite cumma. 3. Veya thine mota var gort o Yurn sinna gort
" i Chimrie. 4. Gav vus da on da dalight Brow vora. 5. Firgive vus
" Sinna vora sin vee firgive Sindara mutha vus. 6. Lyv vus ye i
" Tumtation. 7. Min delivera vus fro Olt ilt. Amen.

☞ I suspect the above copy to be incorrectly printed by Wallace: that " Hellcur " should be " Helleut," &c. &c.

☞ In the following Preface, our Author, Mons. MALLET, extols the late King of Denmark, FREDERICK V. as a great patron of literature, and promoter of knowledge: it is therefore but justice to that Monarch to mention a few of the literary undertakings which owe their rise and establishment to his bounty and love of science.

I. He instituted a Society, consisting of four or five gentlemen, who have a salary of 400l. per annum assigned them, purposely for the cultivation of the Danish Language, and illustration of the Icelandic and Northern Antiquities. They have in their possession a great quantity of manuscripts relative to the latter, and, among the rest, the intire VOLUSPA. This Society has already published two volumes upon Miscellaneous Subjects, in which are two Dissertations relative to the ICELANDIC ANTIQUITIES.

II. He directed and enabled his Professor of Botany, Dr OEDER, to publish that magnificent work the *Flora Danica*; of which he commanded presents to be made to all the principal clergy, engaging them to contribute their assistance towards perfecting an undertaking so useful and extensive: And, in order to promote the same design all over Europe, he commanded this work to be printed in the Latin and French, as well as German and Danish languages; and to be carried on till it shall be found to contain the figures and descriptions of all the plants which grow within the limits of the polar circle, and the 53d degree of latitude.

III. He sent the celebrated Mission of Literati to explore the interior parts of Arabia, and to give us a more perfect account of that now almost unknown country, which was once the seat of learning and science: as also to collect whatever reliques could be found of the old Arabian books, history, &c. These Missionaries were FIVE in number, viz. Mr Professor DE HAVEN, for Philology and Language: Mr Professor FÓRSKAL (a Disciple of Linnæus), for Natural History: a Lieutenant of Engineers, Mr NIEBUHR, for Geography and Astronomy: Dr CRAMER, for Medicine, and Mr PAURENFEIND, for Drawing and taking Views, &c. The whole design and plan of their voyage may be seen in Mons. MICHAELIS's "*Recueil des questions proposées a une Societé de Savans, qui par ordre de sa Maj. Dan. font le voyage de l' Arabie*, &c." Francf. 1763. 12mo. Of these Five Literati, only one is returned alive out of the East. Their joint observations, however, are in the hands of Mr NIEBUHR, the survivor, which he is preparing for the press in the German language. As some of the travellers died early in their tour, we must not expect to find the original plan entirely compleated The work will be found most perfect in what relates to Geography and Natural History: but though it must from the circumstances above mentioned, prove somewhat defective, the world may nevertheless form considerable expectations of it; and it will, as we are assured, be given to the public in the course of this present year M,DCC,LXX.

THE

FRENCH AUTHOR'S

P R E F A C E.

IF it be allowed that the History of a considerable people is in itself useful and interesting, independent of all accidental circumstances, it must also be acknowledged, that there are certain points of time when such a History runs a better chance of being received than at any other. This is more particularly the case, when a general curiosity is excited concerning the nation which is the subject of that history. An illustrious reign *, distinguished by whatever can render it dear to a people, and glorious in the eyes of sensible observers, cannot attract the attention of mankind, without inspiring at the same time a desire of knowing the principal events which have preceded that reign.

This reflection sufficiently justifies my design of publishing a new History of Denmark in the French Language. If I am fortunate enough to succeed in my undertaking, I shall be the more happy, as I shall, in many respects, answer the ends of my present employment, and shall give, at the same time, a proof of my gratitude to the Danish nation, who have so generously adopted me for their fellow-citizen.

I am not ignorant that many persons have executed long ago, either in the whole or in part, a work of the same kind with mine; and I shall

* Our Author here (and below, p. xxxix.) pays a compliment to the late King of Denmark, Frederick V. with what reason, see the preceding page.

shall, in its proper place, do justice to their diligence *. But as the volume which I now offer to the public relates to a subject which these authors have treated either very superficially, or not at all, I shall here, in a few words, give my reasons why, at setting out, I have followed a plan somewhat different from theirs.

To run cursorily over a number of events, unconnected and void of circumstances, without being able to penetrate into their true causes; to see people, princes, conquerors, and legislators succeed one another rapidly upon the stage, without knowing any thing of their real character, manner of thinking, or of the spirit which animated them; this is to have only the skeleton of history; this is merely to behold a parcel of dark and obscure shadows, instead of living and conversing with real men. For this reason, I have all along resolved not to meddle with the body of the Danish History, till I have presented my readers with a sketch of the manners and genius of the first inhabitants of Denmark. But I imagined, like those who have preceded me in this attempt, that a few pages would have sufficed for illustrating the most essential of these points: nor was it till I had examined this matter with new attention, that I discovered my mistake. I then found, that too much brevity would defeat the end I proposed, which was, to place my subject in different points of view, all of them equally new and interesting.

In fact, History has not recorded the annals of a people who have occasioned greater, more sudden, or more numerous revolutions in Europe than the Scandinavians, or whose antiquities, at the same time, are so little known. Had, indeed, their emigrations been only like those sudden torrents of which all traces and remembrance are soon effaced, the indifference that has been shown to them would have been sufficiently justified by the barbarism they have been reproached with. But, during those general inundations, the face of Europe underwent so total a change, and during the confusion they occasioned such different establishments took place, new societies were formed, animated so intirely with a new spirit, that the History of our own manners and institutions ought necessarily to ascend back, and even dwell a considerable time upon a period which discovers to us their chief origin and source.

But I ought not barely to assert this. Permit me to support the assertion by proofs. For this purpose, let us briefly run over all the different Revolutions which this part of the world underwent, during the long course of ages which its History comprehends, in order to see

* Our Author probably alludes to a former History of Denmark in the French language (dedicated to the present King's grandfather, K. Frederick IV.) intitled, "*L'Histoire de Dannemarc avant et depuis l'Etablissement de la Monarchie: Par Mr* "*J. B.* Des Roches, *Escuyer, Conseiller et Avocat General du Roi Tr. Chr. au Bureau* "*des Finances et Chambre du Domaine de la Generalité de la Rochelle.*" Amst. 1730. 6 vol. 12mo. To this work is prefixed a *Preface Historique, pour servir d'Introduction a l'Histoire de Dannemarc*; which contains a tolerable display of the Northern Antiquities, &c.

see what share the nations of the north have had in producing them. If we recur back to the remotest times, we observe a nation issuing step by step from the forests of Scythia, incessantly increasing, and dividing to take possession of the uncultivated countries which it met with in its progress. Very soon after, we see the same people, like a tree full of vigour, extending long branches over all Europe; we see them also carrying with them, wherever they came, from the borders of the Black Sea, to the extremities of Spain, of Sicily, and Greece, a religion simple and martial as themselves, a form of government dictated by good sense and liberty, a restless unconquered spirit, apt to take fire at the very mention of subjection and constraint, and a ferocious courage, nourished by a savage and vagabond life. While the gentleness of the climate softened imperceptibly the ferocity of those who settled in the south, colonies of Egyptians and Phenicians mixing with them upon the coasts of Greece, and thence passing over to those of Italy, taught them at last to live in cities, to cultivate letters, arts, and commerce. Thus their opinions, their customs, and genius were blended together, and new states were formed upon new plans. Rome, in the mean time, arose, and at length carried all before her. In proportion as she increased in grandeur, she forgot her ancient manners, and destroyed, among the nations whom she overpowered, the original spirit with which they were animated. But this spirit continued unaltered in the colder countries of Europe, and maintained itself there like the independency of the inhabitants. Scarce could fifteen or sixteen centuries produce there any change in that spirit. There it renewed itself incessantly; for, during the whole of that long interval, new adventurers issuing continually from the original inexhaustible country, trod upon the heels of their fathers towards the north, and, being in their turn succeeded by new troops of followers, they pushed one another forwards, like the waves of the sea. The northern countries, thus overstocked, and unable any longer to contain such restless inhabitants, equally greedy of glory and plunder, discharged at length, upon the Roman empire, the weight that oppressed them. The barriers of the empire, ill defended by a people whom prosperity had enervated, were borne down on all sides by torrents of victorious armies. We then see the conquerors introducing, among the nations they vanquished, viz. into the very bosom of slavery and sloth, that spirit of independance and equality, that elevation of soul, that taste for rural and military life, which both the one and the other had originally derived from the same common source, but which were then among the Romans breathing their last. Dispositions and principles so opposite, struggled long with forces sufficiently equal, but they united in the end, they coalesced together, and from their coalition sprung those principles and that spirit which governed, afterwards, almost all the states of Europe, and which, notwithstanding the differences of climate, of religion, and particular accidents, do still visibly reign in them, and retain, to this day, more or less, the traces of their first common original.

It

It is easy to see, from this short sketch, how greatly the nations of the north have influenced the different fates of Europe: And if it be worth while to trace its revolutions to their causes, if the illustration of its institutions, of its police, of its customs, of its manners, of its laws, be a subject of useful and interesting inquiry, it must be allowed, that the antiquities of the north, that is to say, every thing which tends to make us acquainted with its ancient inhabitants, merits a share in the attention of thinking men. But to render this obvious by a particular example: Is it not well known, that the most flourishing and celebrated states of Europe owe originally to the northern nations whatever liberty they now enjoy, either in their constitution, or in the spirit of their government? For although the Gothic form of government has been almost every where altered or abolished, have we not retained, in most things, the opinions, the customs, the manners which that government had a tendency to produce? Is not this, in fact, the principal source of that courage, of that aversion to slavery, of that empire of honour which characterise in general the European nations, and of that moderation, of that easiness of access, and peculiar attention to the rights of humanity, which so happily distinguish our sovereigns from the inaccessible and superb tyrants of Asia? The immense extent of the Roman empire had rendered its constitution so despotic and military, many of its emperors were such ferocious monsters, its senate was become so mean-spirited and vile, that all elevation of sentiment, every thing that was noble and manly, seems to have been for ever banished from their hearts and minds: Insomuch, that if all Europe had received the yoke of Rome in this her state of debasement, this fine part of the world, reduced to the inglorious condition of the rest, could not have avoided falling into that kind of barbarity, which is of all others the most incurable; as, by making as many slaves as there are men, it degrades them so low, as not to leave them even a thought or desire of bettering their condition. But nature had long prepared a remedy for such great evils, in that unsubmitting, unconquerable spirit, with which she had inspired the people of the north; and thus she made amends to the human race for all the calamities which, in other respects, the inroads of these nations, and the overthrow of the Roman empire produced.

" The great prerogative of Scandinavia (says the admirable author " of the Spirit of Laws), and what ought to recommend its inhabi- " tants beyond every people upon earth, is, that they afforded the " great resource to the liberty of Europe, that is, to almost all the " liberty that is among men. The Goth JORNANDES (adds he) calls " the north of Europe THE FORGE OF MANKIND. I should rather " call it, the forge of those instruments which broke the fetters manu- " factured in the south. It was there those valiant nations were bred, " who left their native climes to destroy tyrants and slaves, and to " teach men that nature having made them equal, no reason could be

" assigned

" assigned for their becoming dependent, but their mutual happi-
" ness."

If these considerations be of any weight, I shall easily be excused for having treated at so much length the antiquities of the nation whose history I write. The judicious public will see and decide, whether I have conceived a just idea of my subject, or whether, from an illusion too common with Authors, I have not ascribed to it more importance than it deserves I should not be without some apprehensions of this kind, if that were always true which is commonly said, that we grow fond of our labours in proportion as they are difficult. Many tedious and unentertaining volumes I have been obliged to peruse: I have had more than one language to learn: My materials were widely scattered, ill digested, and often little known: It was not easy to collect them, or to accommodate them to my purpose. These are all circumstances ill calculated, it must be owned, to give me much assurance. But I have likewise met with very considerable assistances; several learned men have treated particular points of the antiquities of the north with that deep erudition which characterises the studies of the last age. I cannot mention without acknowledgement and praise, BARTHOLINUS, WORMIUS, STEPHANIUS, ARNGRIM JONAS, TORFÆUS, &c. I have also consulted with advantage, two learned strangers, Mess. PELLOUTIER and DALIN. The first, in his History of the Celtes, has thrown a great deal of light upon the religion of the first inhabitants of Europe. The second has given a new History of Sweden; which discovers extensive reading and genius. In three or four chapters, where the author treats of the religion, the laws, and manners of the ancient Swedes, we find these subjects discussed with unusual perspicuity and elegance.

There are people of that happy genius, that they need only wish in order to succeed, and have every resource within themselves. As for me, I dare hardly reckon among my advantages the strong motives and inducements I have had to my undertaking. I dare not tell strangers, that I have had the happiness of being encouraged by more than one Mæcenas, and by a Prince, alike knowing, and zealous in the advancement of knowledge. They would judge of me, unquestionably, according to what such numerous and great encouragements ought to have produced; when, perhaps, I hardly find myself capable of discharging the duties which lie upon me in common with all Historians.

Is it necessary that I should take notice, before I conclude, that I am about to delineate a nation in its infancy, and that the greatest part of the other Europeans were neither less savage, nor less uncivilized, during the same period? I shall give sufficient proofs of this in other places, being persuaded that there is among nations an emulation of glory, which often degenerates into jealousy, and puts them upon assuming a pre-eminence upon the most chimerical advantages: That there glows in their bosoms a patriotic zeal, which is often so blind

and

and ill informed, as to take alarm at the most slender and indifferent declarations made in favour of others.

In the second volume will be found a Translation of the EDDA, and of some other fragments of Mythology and ancient pieces of Poetry. They are singular, and, in many respects, precious monuments, which throw much light upon the Antiquities of the north, and upon those of the other 'Gothic *' nations. They will serve for Proofs, and be a Supplement to this Description of the Manners of the Ancient Danes; and for this reason, as well as out of deference to the advice of some persons of taste, I was induced to translate them, and to annex them to it.

* *Celtes*, Orig.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, &c. OF THE ANCIENT DANES, And other NORTHERN NATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

Denmark described, and the several countries subject to its Crown, viz. Norway, Iceland, and Greenland.

THE several countries, which compose the Danish monarchy, have seldom justice done them by the other nations of Europe. The notions entertained of them are not commonly the most favourable or true. This is owing to various causes. The situation of some of the provinces is so remote, that

ſkilful travellers have ſeldom had occaſion to viſit them. Thoſe who have pretended to deſcribe them have been generally wanting in fidelity or exactneſs; ſome of their deſcriptions are grown obſolete, ſo that what was once true, is no longer ſo at preſent. Laſtly, ſuch confuſion and prejudices have been occaſioned by that vague term THE NORTH, that we are not to wonder if Denmark has been thought ſlightly of by the ſouthern nations. To correct theſe miſtakes, I ſhall lay before the reader a faithful account of the preſent ſtate of theſe countries: In which I ſhall be more or leſs diffuſe in proportion as they are more or leſs known to foreigners, for whom this work is principally deſigned. And if the picture I draw, preſents nothing very agreeable or ſtriking, I dare at leaſt promiſe that it ſhall be very exact and faithful.

DENMARK is naturally divided into continent, and iſlands. Among the iſlands, the firſt that merits attention, as well on account of its ſize as fertility, is ZEALAND. In this iſle is ſeated COPENHAGEN, the capital of the whole kingdom; which derives its name from its harbour *, one of the fineſt in the world. This city is built upon the very edge of that channel, ſo well known by the name of the SOUND, and receives into its boſom a ſmall arm of the ſea, which divides

* It's name in the Daniſh language is KIOBENHAFEN; which literally is a "Haven for merchandize or traffic;" from KIOBE, *Mercari*, and HAFEN, *Portus*. This city has been reckoned by travellers to be about the ſize of Briſtol.

divides Zealand from another iſle of leſs extent, but of very agreeable ſituation, named AMAC. Copenhagen, which is at preſent very ſtrong, wealthy, and populous, hath continually improved in its dimenſions and beauty ever ſince King Chriſtopher of Bavaria fixed his reſidence there in the year 1443: but it owes its greateſt ſplendor to the laſt reign, and that of the preſent King Frederic V. in which it hath been adorned with a palace worthy of the monarch who inhabits it, and with many ſtately buildings, as well public as private.

At ſome leagues diſtance towards the north, this channel, which waſhes the walls of Copenhagen, grows gradually narrower, being confined between the two oppoſite coaſts of Zealand and Schonen, till it forms at length what is properly called the Paſſage of the Sound; one of the moſt celebrated and moſt frequented ſtraits in the world; and which opens the principal communication between the ocean and the Baltic. ELSENORE, which is ſituated on the brink of the Sound, and defended by the fortreſs of CRONENBERG, enjoys the ever-moving picture of a multitude of ſhips, which paſs and repaſs, and come to pay their tribute to the king *. About a league diſtant, the oppoſite ſhore terminates the proſpect in a very agreeable manner; and not far off, between the two banks, riſes the little iſle of WEME, famous for the

obſervations

* A certain toll paid by the merchant-ſhips for paſſing the Sound.

obſervations of Tycho Brahe. Although the other parts of Zealand afford nothing ſo ſtriking as this, the eye will find enough to entertain it every where elſe. Here are vaſt plains covered with a moſt delightful verdure, which ſprings earlier, and continues longer than the ſouthern nations would imagine. Theſe plains are interſperſed with little hills, lakes, and groves; and adorned with ſeveral palaces, many gentlemens ſeats *, and a good number of cities and towns. The ſoil, though light and ſomewhat ſandy, produces a great quantity of grain, particularly of oats and barley: nor is it deficient in woods and paſtures. Beſides, the ſea and lakes furniſh this iſland with fiſh in ſuch abundance, as might well ſupply the want of the other productions and advantages in a country leſs fertile or leſs addicted to commerce.

But fertility is in a ſtill more eminent degree the character of FUNEN, which is the ſecond of the Daniſh iſles in point of ſize, but the firſt in goodneſs of ſoil. This iſland riſes higher than that of Zealand, and is ſeparated from it by an arm of the ſea, which, on account of its breadth, is called the GREAT BELT, to diſtinguiſh it from another ſmaller channel, that divides it from Jutland, and is called the LESSER BELT. Corn, paſture, and fruits grow plentifully in this iſland, which preſents the moſt delightful appearance. In the middle of a vaſt plain ſtands ODENSEE, the capital

* In French, *Chateaux*.

pital of the province; and ſeven towns leſs conſiderable adorn the ſea-coaſts at almoſt equal diſtances.

The iſles of LALAND and FALSTRIA yield not much in point of fertility to Funen, being both of them famous for their fine wheat: but the latter of theſe produces alſo fruits in ſuch abundance, that one may juſtly call it the Orchard of Denmark. Amidſt the multitude of leſſer iſlands that are ſcattered round the principal ones, there are few which do not ſupply their inhabitants with neceſſaries, and even afford them an overplus for traffic. LANGLAND hath plenty of fine corn fields. BORNHOLM, MONA, and SAMSOE have excellent paſtures. AMAC is found very proper for pulſe, and is become a fruitful garden under the hands of thoſe induſtrious Flemings, who were brought hither by Queen Elizabeth, wife of Chriſtian II. and ſiſter of Charles V.

If we paſs over to the provinces on the Continent, we ſhall find new reaſons to convince us, that Denmark plentifully ſupports its inhabitants, and is able to enrich even a numerous people. JUTLAND, the largeſt of theſe provinces, forms the head of that long peninſula, which is bounded by the ocean to the weſt, by the gulph of Categade, and the Baltic to the eaſt, and which opens a communication into Germany towards the ſouth. From this province they carry into Norway a great part of the corn uſed in that kingdom; and hence are exported thoſe thouſands of head of cattle, which are every year brought into Holland and other countries. Here are alſo bred thoſe Daniſh

horſes,

horſes, whoſe beauty makes them ſo much ſought after in all parts of Europe. If the inland parts are barren in ſome places, the coaſts extremely abound with fiſh. This affords a reſource ſo much the greater, as they increaſe and breed in the long bays, which run up into the country, in ſuch a manner that almoſt all the inhabitants enjoy the benefit of the fiſhery. The gulph of LIMFIORDE in particular reaches almoſt from one ſea to the other; and the fiſhing therein is ſo rich, that, after it has ſupplied the wants of the province, it conſtantly produces large quantities for exportation *.

Nature hath been no leſs indulgent to the ſouthern part of this peninſula, which forms the dutchy of SLESWIC. Although the inland parts of this country have large tracts of heath and barren fields, yet the fertility of its coaſts, its advantageous ſituation between the ocean and the Baltic, the number and convenience of its harbours, and the large traffic which it carries on, have enriched many of its cities, and rendered it an agreeable and flouriſhing province †.

What I have ſaid of the dutchy of Sleſwic is pretty nearly applicable to the dutchy of HOLSTEIN. This province

* "The principal cities of Jutland are ALBURG, NYCOPPING, WYBURG, AARHUSEN, RANDERS, HORSENS, WARDE, RIBE, FREDERICIA, COLDING, &c. *Firſt Edit.*

† "SLESWIC, an ancient and conſiderable city, is the capital of the dutchy. FLENSBURG hath an extenſive commerce. FREDERICKSTADT, TONDEREN, and TONNINGEN, are cities of tolerable ſize." *Firſt Edit.*

province is in general rich, fertile, and populous *. Fat and plentiful paſtures; large and trading cities ſituate near together; coaſts abounding in fiſh, and a large river † which terminates the province towards the ſouth, form its principal advantages ‡.

On the other ſide of the Elb, after croſſing the country of Bremen, we find two ſmall provinces, which have been long united to the crown of Denmark. Theſe

* Lord Moleſworth obſerves, that this country very much reſembles ENGLAND. Another traveller has remarked, that the inhabitants are in their perſons very like the ENGLISH. See "Howell's Letters," vol. 1. ſect. 6. lett. 4. It ſeems this writer was at Rendſburg (or as he calls it Rainſburg) when the king of Denmark held an aſſembly of the ſtates there in 1632. "Among other "things, he ſays, I put myſelf to "mark the carriage of the Hol"ſtein gentlemen, as they were "going in and out at the parlia"ment-houſe: and obſerving well "their phyſiognomies, their com"plections, and gait; I thought "verily I was in England; for "they reſemble the Engliſh more "than either Welſh or Scot, "(though cohabiting upon the "ſame iſland) or any other people "that ever I ſaw yet; which "makes me verily believe, that "the Engliſh nation came firſt "from this lower circle of Saxo"ony; and there is one thing "that ſtrengtheneth me in this "belief; that there is an ancient "town hard by, called Lunden, "and an iſland called Angles; "whence it may well be that our "country came from Britannia to "be Anglia." This remark is confirmed by the moſt diligent inquirers into this ſubject, who place the country of our Saxon anceſtors in the Cimbric Cherſoneſe, in the tracts of land ſince known by the names of Jutland, Angelen, and Holſtein. T.

† The Elb.

‡ "The king of Denmark poſ"ſeſſes here RENDSBURG, a very "ſtrong place, ALTONA, a town "of great trade, and GLUCKER"STADT, a good fortification."
Firſt Edit.

Theſe are the counties of OLDENBURG and DELMENHORST, which are comprized within the circle of Weſtphalia, and have received their names from their two principal cities.

The temperature of the air is nearly the ſame in the greateſt part of theſe provinces, and, except in the north of Jutland, is much milder than their ſituation would incline one to believe, being rarely ſubject to very long or rigorous cold. To comprehend this, it will be ſufficient to remind the reader of this general obſervation, that countries ſurrounded with the ſea, have their atmoſphere loaded with vapours continually exhaling from it, which break and blunt the nitrous particles of the air, and ſoften its rigours. When the ſtraits and gulphs, which ſurround the Daniſh iſlands, become frozen in very ſharp winters, it is leſs owing to the prevalence of the froſt there, than to the large flakes of ice which are driven by the winds out of the northern ſeas, and are there aſſembled and united. The ſummer ſeaſon commonly begins with the month of May, and continues till October: And during its continuance, the beauty of the country, the freſhneſs and ſhortneſs of the nights, and the convenience of navigation in a country ſurrounded and croſſed by the ſea, eaſily repair and make the inhabitants forget the languors and interruptions which winter cauſes in their buſineſs and amuſements.

If travellers for the moſt part have not been very favourable in their accounts of Denmark, they have been ſtill leſs tender of NORWAY. They have often confounded

confounded it with Lapland, and have given descriptions of its inhabitants, and their manners, which are hardly applicable to the savages of that country. The notion that is generally entertained of the extreme coldness of the climate here is no less unjust. It is true, that in a kingdom which extends thirteen degrees from north to south, the temperature of the air cannot every where be the same: accordingly the most northern parts of Norway, those which face the east, and which are not sheltered by the mountains from the fury of the north winds, are undoubtedly exposed to rigorous winters. But almost all that length of coast, which is washed by the sea towards the west, and which forms so considerable a part of Norway, commonly enjoys an air tolerably temperate, even in the middle of winter. Here are none of those "desolate regions, where Winter hath established his "eternal empire, and where he reigns among horrid "heaps of ice and snow," as ignorance hath often led travellers, and a fondness for the marvellous induced poets to speak of Norway. It is seldom that a very sharp frost lasts there a fortnight or three weeks together; it rains frequently at BERGEN in the midst of winter *, and the ports of Hamburg, Lubeck, and Amsterdam, are locked up with frost ten times for once that this city is so exposed. In short, this is an accident that doth not happen more than two or three

* See PONTOPPIDAN's Natural History of Norway, vol. I.

times in an age. The vapours which riſe from the ocean, continually ſoften the ſharpneſs of the cold; and it is only on the coaſts of Iceland, Finmark, and Greenland, that are found thoſe immenſe and eternal banks of ice, of which voyagers make ſuch a noiſe, and which, when they are ſevered, may ſometimes float along the coaſts of Norway.

The greateſt inconvenience to which this vaſt country is expoſed, ariſes without diſpute, from the inequality of the ground, from it's being almoſt entirely covered with rocks and ſtones, and croſſed every way by high and large mountains, which render a great part of it wild and deſert. There grow, notwithſtanding, ſeveral ſorts of grain in many of the provinces, as in the UPLANDS, the RYFOLKE, JEDEREN *; the reſt which have not this advantage may eaſily be ſupplied from Jutland or the Daniſh iſlands, by means of navigation. Various products, with which this country abounds, ſufficiently compenſate for that diſadvantage.

The other nations of Europe cannot be ignorant that great part of the pitch and tar, of the maſts, planks, and different ſorts of timber, which are every where uſed, come from Norway. Theſe articles alone would be ſufficient to procure an eaſy competence for the inhabitants of the inland and eaſtern parts of this country.

* HOLBERG's Danm. og. Norg. Beſkrivelſe. [i. e. Deſcription of Denmark and Norway.] p. 36. & ſeqq.

country. The weſtern coaſt hath a reſource not leſs rich or leſs certain, in the prodigious abundance of its fiſh. Cod, ſalmon, and herrings, are no where found in greater quantities. The Norwegians ſupply part of Europe with theſe; and this fruitful branch of commerce becomes every day more extenſive by the care of a wiſe adminiſtration. The very mountains of this country, which at firſt ſight, appear ſo barren, often conceal great riches in their boſoms. Some of them are intire quarries of fine marble, which the luxury of all the cities of Europe could never exhauſt. In others are found jaſper, cryſtal, and ſome precious ſtones; ſeveral mines of gold, though hitherto not very rich; two mines of ſilver by no means ſcanty; much copper; but above all, ſo great a quantity of iron, that this ſingle article brings almoſt as much money into the kingdom, as what ariſes from the ſale of its timber.

At the northern extremity of this kingdom, and of Europe, dwells a people, which, from the earlieſt ages, have differed from the other inhabitants of Scandinavia, in figure, manners, and language. This nation, known by the name of FINNS, or LAPLANDERS*, not only poſſeſs the northern parts of Norway, but alſo vaſt countries in Muſcovy and Sweden. They are a coarſe and ſavage race of men, yet by no means barbarous,

* Our author ſpeaks of theſe as if they were but one, whereas they are two diſtinct people.

barbarous, if we underſtand by this word miſchievous and cruel. Such of them as live upon the ſea coaſts ſupport themſelves by fiſhing, and by a traffic they carry on with a ſort of little barks, which they make and ſell to the Norwegians. The reſt wander up and down in the mountains without any fixed habitation, and gain a ſcanty ſubſiſtence by hunting, by their pelteries, and their rein-deer. Such of them as are neighbours to the Norwegians have embraced chriſtianity, and are ſomewhat civilized by their commerce with that people. The reſt live ſtill in ignorance, not knowing ſo much as the names of the other nations of the world; preſerved by their poverty and their climate from the evils which diſturb the enjoyments of more opulent countries. Their whole religion conſiſts in ſome confuſed notions of an inviſible and tremendous being: and a few ſuperſtitious ceremonies compoſe their worſhip. They have no laws, and ſcarce any magiſtrates: yet have they great humanity, a natural ſoftneſs of diſpoſition, and a very hoſpitable temper.

They were nearly the ſame in the time of Tacitus. "The Finns *," he ſays, "live in extreme ſavageneſs, in ſqualid poverty: have neither arms, nor "ſteeds, nor houſes. Herbs are their food, ſkins "their cloathing, the earth their bed. All their re- "ſource is their arrows, which they point with fiſh bones

* Fenni. Tacit. De morib. Germ. ad. fin.

" bones, for want of iron. Their women live by " hunting, as well as the men *; for they every " where accompany them, and gain their ſhare of the " prey. A rude hovel ſhelters their infants from the " inclemencies of the weather, and the beaſts of prey. " Such is the home to which their young men re- " turn; the aſylum to which the old retire. This kind " of life they think more happy, than the painful " toils of agriculture, than the various labours of " domeſtic management, than that circle of hopes and " fears, in which men are involved by their attention " to the fortune of themſelves and others. Equally " ſecure both as to gods and men, the Finns have " attained that rare privilege, not to form a ſingle " wiſh."

I ought not to ſeparate ICELAND from Norway. This iſland, the largeſt in Europe next to Great Britain, is ſurrounded by that part of the northern ſea, which geographers have been pleaſed to call the Deucaledonian ocean. Its length from eaſt to weſt is about 112 Daniſh miles, (12 to a degree,) and its mean breadth may be 50 of thoſe miles †. Nature itſelf hath marked out the diviſion of this country ‡. Two long chains of mountains run from the middle of the eaſtern

* This ſeems to contradict the paſſage above, that herbs are their food: I ſuppoſe herbs were their ordinary food; fleſh gained by hunting, their regale.

† About 560 Engliſh miles long, and 250 broad. T.

‡ EGERH. OLAI Enarrat. Hiſtor. de Iſland. p. 18. § 6.

eaſtern and weſtern coaſts, riſing by degrees till they meet in the center of the iſland: from whence two other chains of ſmaller hills gradually deſcend till they reach the coaſts that lie north and ſouth; thus making a primary diviſion of the country into four quarters (*fierdingers*) which are diſtinguiſhed by the four points of the compaſs towards which they lie.

The whole iſland can only be conſidered as one vaſt mountain, interſperſed with long and deep vallies, concealing in its boſom heaps of minerals, of vitrified and bituminous ſubſtances, and riſing on all ſides out of the ocean in the form of a ſhort blunted cone *.

Earthquakes and volcanoes have through all ages laid waſte this unhappy iſland. Hecla, the only one of theſe volcanoes, which is known by the name to the reſt of Europe, ſeems at preſent extinct; but the principles of fire, which lie concealed all over the iſland, often break out in other places. There have been already within this century many eruptions, as dreadful as they were unexpected. From the boſom of theſe enormous heaps of ice we have lately ſeen aſcend torrents of ſmoke, of flame, and melted or calcined ſubſtances, which ſpread fire and inundation wide over the neighbouring fields, whilſt they filled the air with thick clouds, and hideous roarings cauſed by the melting of ſuch immenſe quantities of ſnow and

* Vid. Horrebow's Natural Hiſtory of Iceland, paſſim.

and ice. One meets almoſt every where in travelling through this country with marks of the ſame confuſion and diſorder. One ſees enormous piles of ſharp and broken rocks, which are ſometimes porous and half calcined, and often frightful on account of their blackneſs, and the traces of fire, which they ſtill retain. The clefts and hollows of the rocks are only filled with thoſe hideous and barren ruins; but in the valleys, which are formed between the mountains, and which are ſcattered here and there all over the iſland very often at a conſiderable diſtance from each other, are found very extenſive and delightful plains, where nature, who always mingles ſome allay with the rigour of her ſeverities, affords a tolerable aſylum for men who know no better, and a moſt plentiful and delicate nouriſhment for cattle.

I ought to beſtow a word or two upon another northern country dependent on the kingdom of Norway, as well as Iceland, but much more extenſive, more unknown, and more ſavage: I mean GREENLAND, a vaſt country, which one knows not whether to call an iſland or continent. It extends from the 60th to the 80th degree of latitude; farther than that men have not penetrated. All that we can know for certain of it is, that this country, little known to geographers, ſtretches away from its ſouthern point, named Cape Farewel, continually widening both towards the eaſt and weſt. The eaſtern coaſt in ſome places is not diſtant more than 40 Daniſh miles from Iceland, but the ice which ſurrounds it, or other unknown

known cauſes, make it now paſs for inacceſſible. Yet it was chiefly on this coaſt that the Norwegians formerly eſtabliſhed a colony, as we ſhall ſhew hereafter: a colony which at this time is either deſtroyed, or perhaps only neglected, and cut off from all communication with the reſt of the world. With regard to the weſtern coaſt, which alone is frequented by the Danes at preſent; it is known no farther than the 70th degree. It is very probable that on this ſide, Greenland joins to the continent of America. Yet no one hath hitherto reached the bottom of the Bay, or Straits of Davies. The Savages whom the Danes have found on this coaſt are not unlike the Laplanders in figure, yet ſpeak a language quite different from theirs *. They are ſhort of ſtature, and thick-ſet, their viſage is broad and tawny, their lips are thick, and their hair black and coarſe. They are robuſt, phlegmatic, incurious, and even ſtupid when their own

* It is now ſaid that the language of the Greenlanders is nearly the ſame with that of the American Savages in Newfoundland, and on the coaſt of Hudſon's Bay. To prove which aſſertion, it is related, that a few years ago a Moravian miſſionary, who had long reſided among the Greenlanders, went by the favour of Commodore Paliſer to Newfoundland; that he there met with a tribe of Indians, who at firſt ſight were ſhy and reſerved; but hearing him addreſs them very intelligibly in a dialect of their own tongue, cried out in a ſort of tranſport, "Our friend is come." Theſe Moravians have, by moſt diſintereſted labour, and wonderful perſeverance, converted to Chriſtianity and civil life numbers of Greenland Savages.

own intereſt is not immediately concerned. Yet their children have been found capable of the ſame inſtructions as thoſe of Europeans. They live without laws, and without ſuperiors, yet with great union and tranquillity. They are neither quarrelſome nor miſchievous, nor warlike; being greatly afraid of thoſe that are: and they keep fair with the Europeans from this motive. Theft, blows and murder are almoſt unknown to them. They are chaſte before marriage, and love their children tenderly. Their naſtineſs is ſo great, that it renders their hoſpitality almoſt uſeleſs to Europeans; and their ſimplicity hath not been able to preſerve them from having prieſts, who paſs among them for enchanters, and are in truth very great and dexterous cheats. As to their religion, it conſiſts in the belief of certain good and evil Genii, and of a Land of Souls, to which, however, they pay little or no regard in their actions.

CHAPTER II.

Of the first Inhabitants of Denmark, and particularly of the Cimbri.

IT is uselefs to enquire at what period of time Denmark began to be inhabited. Such a refearch would doubtlefs lead us up to an age when all Europe was plunged in ignorance and barbarity. Thefe two words include in them almoft all we know of the hiftory of the firft ages. It is very probable, that the firft Danes were, like all the other Teutonic nations, a colony of Scythians, who fpread themfelves at different times over the countries which lay towards the weft. The refemblance of name might induce us to believe that it was from among the Cimmerian Scythians (whom the ancients placed to the north of the Euxine fea) that the firft colonies were fent into Denmark; and that from this people they inherited the name of Cimbri *, which they bore fo long before

* Kempers or combatants; from *kempfen*, to fight. See Forft. North Difcov. 24. Strabo defcribes them as having red hair and blue eyes.

fore they aſſumed that of Danes *. But this reſemblance of name, which many hiſtorians produce as a ſolid proof, is liable to ſo many different explanations, that it is better to acknowledge once for all, that this ſubject is as incapable of certainty, as it is unworthy of reſearch.

Whatever was the origin of the Cimbri, they for a long time before the birth of Chriſt inhabited the country, which received from them the name of the Cimbrica Cherſoneſus †, and probably comprehended Jutland, Sleſwic, and Holſtein, and perhaps ſome of the neighbouring provinces. The ancients conſidered this people as a branch of the Germans, and never diſtinguiſhed the one from the other in the deſcriptions they have left us of the manners and cuſtoms of that nation. The hiſtorical monuments of the north give us ſtill leſs information about them, and go no farther back than the arrival of Odin; the epoch of which, I am inclined to place, with the celebrated Torfæus, about 70 years before the birth of Chriſt. All that paſſed in Denmark before that period would be entirely unknown to us, if the famous expedition of the Cimbri into Italy had not drawn upon them the attention of a people who enjoyed the advantage of

* The hiſtorians of the north do not inform us when this name began to be in uſe. Among foreign writers, Procopius, an author of the VIth century, is the firſt who appears to have made uſe of it. We ſhall ſee below, what we are to think of the etymologies which have been given of this name.

† Or Cimbric Peninſula.

having hiſtorians. It is a ſingle gleam, which for a moment throws light upon the ages of obſcurity: ſhort and tranſient as it is, let us nevertheleſs catch it, in order to diſcover, if poſſible, a feature or two of the character of this people.

The hiſtory of Rome * informs us, that in the conſulſhip of Cæcilius Metellus and Papirius Carbo, about one hundred and eleven years before the Chriſtian æra †, the republic was agitated by inteſtine diviſions which already began to threaten it's liberty, when the intrigues of the ſeveral factions were all at once ſuſpended by the ſudden news of an irruption of Barbarians. More than three hundred thouſand men, known by the name of Cimbri and Teutones ‡, who chiefly iſſued from the Cimbric Cherſoneſe, and the neighbouring iſlands, had forſaken their country to go in ſearch of a more favourable climate, of plunder and glory. They attacked and ſubdued at once whatever people they found in their paſſage, and as they met with no reſiſtance, reſolved to puſh their conqueſts farther. The Gauls were overwhelmed with this torrent, whoſe courſe was for a long time marked by the moſt horrible deſolation. Terror every where went before them, and when it was reported at Rome, that they were diſpoſed to paſs into Italy, the conſternation

* See PLUTARCH in Mario.—OROS. l. 5.—VEL. PATERCUL. l. 2.—T. LIV. epit. l. 68.—Flor. l. 3. c. 30.

† Anno Urb. cond. 640.

‡ Or Theodan, i. e. the companions of the Kimbers or Cimbri. See Forſt. N. Diſcov. 24.

conſternation there became general. The ſenate diſpatched Papirius Carbo with an army to guard the paſſage of the Alps, deeming it a ſufficient degree of good fortune, if they could but preſerve Italy from theſe formidable gueſts. But, as they took a different rout, and ſtopped ſome time on the banks of the Danube, the Romans reſumed courage, and condemning their former fears, ſent in a menacing tone to the Cimbri, to bid them take care not to diſturb the Norici their allies. At the ſame time, the Cimbri being informed that a Roman army approached them, and reſpecting the character of the Republic, ſent ambaſſadors to the Conſul Papirius, " to excuſe themſelves, " foraſmuch as having come from the remote parts " of the north, they could not poſſibly know that the " Norici were the allies of the Romans:" adding, " that they only knew it to be a received law among " all nations, that the conqueror hath a right to whatever he can acquire: and that the Romans themſelves had no other pretenſions to moſt of the countries they had ſubdued, than what was founded on " the ſword. That they had, however, a great veneration for the Roman people, on account of their " virtue and bravery; in conſideration of which, although they knew not what it was to fear, they " conſented to leave the Norici in peace, and to employ their valour in ſome other quarter, where " they could do it without incurring the diſpleaſure " of the common-wealth." Satisfied with ſo moderate an anſwer, the Conſul ſuffered them quietly to

remove;

remove; but when the Cimbri were retired into Dalmatia, and expected nothing less than hostilities from the Romans, a party of those commanded by Carbo, surprised them by night, asleep and unarmed. These brave warriors, full of indignation, flew to their arms and defended themselves with so much intrepidity, that they wrested the victory out of their enemies hands, and forced them to seek their safety by flight. But although the Romans almost all escaped the vengeance of their enemies, this defeat was not the less fatal to the republic; for the splendour and reputation which it added to the arms of the Cimbri, drew on all sides under their banners such nations as were either impatient of the Roman yoke, or jealous of their incroachments: particularly the Tigurini and Ambrones, two people originally of Helvetia. With these new auxiliaries they overwhelmed Gaul a second time, and advancing to the foot of the Pyrenees, endeavoured to establish themselves in Spain: but meeting with a vigorous repulse from the Celtiberians, and tired with so many unprofitable invasions, they sent a new embassy to the Romans, to offer them their services, upon condition they would give them lands to cultivate. The Senate, too prudent to enter into any kind of accommodation with such dangerous enemies, and already divided among themselves about the distribution of lands, returned a direct refusal to their demand. Upon which the Cimbri resolved to seize by force what they could not gain by intreaty, and immediately fell with so much fury upon the new Consul

Conſul Silanus, who had received orders to march a-gainſt them, that they forced his intrenchments, pillaged his camp, and cut all his army in pieces. This victory was ſoon after followed by another, which their allies the Ambrones gained over Caſſius Longinus at the mouth of the Rhone ; and to compleat the misfortune, a third army of Romans, more conſiderable than the two former, was ſoon after entirely defeated. Scaurus, who commanded it, was made priſoner, and afterwards put to death ; his two ſons were ſlain, and more than four-ſcore thouſand of the Romans and their allies were left dead on the field. Laſt of all, two other generals, the Conſul Manlius, and the proconſul Cæpio, to whom had been intruſted a fourth army already half vanquiſhed with fear, and who were diſunited and jealous of each other, were attacked near the Rhone, each of them in his camp, and entirely defeated.

Such repeated loſſes filled Rome with grief and terror ; and many began to deſpair even of the ſafety of the ſtate. In this melancholy conjuncture, minds leſs firm than thoſe of theſe ſpirited Republicans, would, doubtleſs, have ſuggeſted the imprudent meaſure of granting to the conquerors conditions capable of ſoftening them : they would have given them at once the lands they had required, or perhaps have purchaſed their friendſhip with a ſum of money. This dangerous policy would probably have ruined Rome in this exigence, as it did ſome ages after. The Gauls, the Germans, and the Scythians, poor and greedy nations,

who

who gaſped after nothing but ſlaughter and booty, roving and warlike as well by inclination as neceſſity, would have haraſſed by continual inroads, a people which had let them ſee that they were at once richer and weaker than themſelves. The prudent firmneſs of the Senate, and the valour of Marius ſaved Rome for this time from the danger under which it afterwards ſunk. All the citizens now turned their eyes towards the conqueror of Jugurtha, as their laſt and only ſupport. They decreed him conſular honours for the fourth time, and aſſociated with him Catulus Luctatius, a perſon ſcarcely inferior to him in military ſkill, and who far excelled him in all the other qualities, which make a great ſtateſman.

Marius having quickly diſcovered that the ill ſucceſs of his predeceſſors was the effect of their imprudence, formed to himſelf a very different plan of conduct. In particular, he reſolved not to join battle with the enemy, till their furious ardour was abated, and till his ſoldiers familiarized to the ſight of them, ſhould no longer conſider themſelves as conquered before they came to blows. Their former victories, their tallneſs of ſtature, rendered ſtill more terrible by their dreſs, their ferocious air, their barbarous ſhouts, and unuſual manner of fighting, had all contributed to ſtrike the Romans with the greateſt terror; and this terror was the firſt enemy he had to encounter; an enemy which time alone could ſubdue. With this view, Marius judged it neceſſary to encamp on the banks of the Rhone, in a ſituation naturally advanta-

geous,

geous, where he laid in all ſorts of proviſions in great abundance, that he might not be compelled to engage before he ſaw a convenient opportunity. This coolneſs of the general was regarded by thoſe Barbarians as a mark of cowardice. They reſolved, therefore, to divide themſelves into different bodies, and ſo penetrate into Italy. The Cimbri and Tigurini went to meet Catulus; the Ambrones and Teutones hoping to provoke the Romans to fight, came and encamped in a plain full in their front. But nothing could induce Marius to change his reſolution.

Nevertheleſs, theſe Barbarians inſulted the Romans inceſſantly by every means they could deviſe: they advanced as far as the very intrenchments of their camp, to reproach and deride them; they challenged the officers and the general himſelf to ſingle combat. The Roman ſoldiers were by degrees accuſtomed to look their enemies in the face, while the provocations they received every day, more and more whetted their reſentment. Many of them even broke out into reproaches againſt Marius for appearing ſo much to diſtruſt their courage; and this dexterous general, to appeaſe them, had recourſe to a Syrian propheteſs in his camp, who aſſured them that the Gods did not yet approve of their fighting.

At length, the patience of the Teutones was exhauſted, and they endeavoured to force the Roman intrenchments; but here they were repulſed with loſs: upon which, they reſolved to abandon their camp, and attempt an irruption into Italy. They filed

off for ſix days together in the preſence of Marius's army, inſulting his ſoldiers with the moſt provoking language, and aſking them, if they had any meſſage to ſend to their wives, whom they hoped ſoon to ſee. Marius heard all theſe bravados with his accuſtomed coolneſs; but when their whole army was paſſed by, he followed them as far as Aix in Provence, haraſſing their rear-guard without intermiſſion. When he was arrived at this place, he halted, in order to let his ſoldiers enjoy what they had ardently deſired ſo long, a pitched battle. They began with ſkirmiſhing on both ſides, till the fight inſenſibly growing more ſerious, at length both armies made the moſt furious attacks. Thirty thouſand Ambrones advanced firſt, marching in a kind of meaſure to the ſound of their inſtruments. A body of Ligurians, ſupported by the Romans, repulſed them with great loſs: but as they betook themſelves to flight, their wives came forth to meet them with ſwords and hatchets in their hands, and bitterly reproaching them, and ſtriking indiſcriminately friend and foe, endeavoured to ſnatch with their naked hands the enemies weapons, maintaining an invincible firmneſs even till death. This firſt action raiſed the courage of the Romans, and was the prelude to a victory ſtill more deciſive.

After the greateſt part of the Ambrones had periſhed in that day's action, Marius cauſed his army to retire back to his camp, ordering them to keep ſtrict watch, and to lye cloſe without making any movement, as if they were affrighted at their own victory.

On

On the other hand, in the camp of the Teutones were heard continual howlings, like to thoſe of ſavage beaſts; ſo hideous, that the Romans, and even their general himſelf could not help teſtifying their horror. They notwithſtanding lay quiet that night, and the day following, being buſily employed in preparing all things for a ſecond engagement. Marius, on his part, took all neceſſary precautions; he placed in an ambuſcade three thouſand men commanded by Marcellus, with orders to attack the enemy in the rear, as ſoon as they ſhould perceive the battle was begun. When both armies were come within ſight of each other, Marius commanded his cavalry to diſmount; but the Teutones, hurried on by that blind impetuoſity which diſtinguiſhes all barbarous nations, inſtead of waiting till the Romans were come down into the plain, attacked them on an eminence where they were advantageouſly poſted. At the ſame inſtant, Marcellus appeared ſuddenly behind with his troops, and hemming them in, threw their ranks into diſorder, ſo that they were quickly forced to fly. Then the victory declared itſelf entirely in favour of the Romans, and a moſt horrible carnage enſued. If we may take literally what ſome of the Roman hiſtorians have * related, there periſhed more than a hundred thouſand Teutones, including the priſoners. Others content themſelves with ſaying, that the number of the ſlain was incredible; that the inhabitants of Marſeilles, for

* See Plutarch's Life of Marius.

for a long time after, made inclofures for their gardens and vineyards with the bones; and that the earth thereabouts was fo much fattened, that its increafe of produce was prodigious. Marius, loaded with glory, after a victory fo illuftrious in itfelf, and fo important in its confequences, was a fifth time honoured with the confular fafces; but he would not triumph till he had fecured the repofe of Italy, by the entire defeat of all the Barbarians. The Cimbri, who had feparated themfelves from the Teutones, ftill threatened its fafety. They had penetrated as far as the banks of the Adige; which Catulus Luctatius was not ftrong enough to prevent them from croffing. The progrefs they made ftill caufed violent alarms in Rome; Marius was charged to raife a new army with the utmoft fpeed, and to go and engage them. The Cimbri had halted near the Po, in hopes that the Teutones, of whofe fate they were ignorant, would quickly join them. Wondering at the delay of thefe their affociates, they fent to Marius a fecond time, to demand an allotment of land, fufficient to maintain themfelves and the Teutones their brethren. Marius anfwered them, that "their brethren already poffeffed more "than they defired, and that they would not eafily "quit what he had affigned them." The Cimbri, irritated by this raillery, inftantly refolved to take ample vengeance.

They prepared immediately for battle, and their king or general, named Bojorix, approached the Roman camp with a fmall party of horfe, to challenge

Marius,

Marius, and to agree with him on a day and place of action. Marius anſwered, that although it was not the cuſtom of the Romans to conſult their enemies on this ſubject, he would, notwithſtanding, for once oblige them, and therefore appointed the next day but one, and the plain of Verceil for their meeting. At the time appointed, the two armies marched thither; the Romans ranged themſelves in two wings: Catulus commanded a body of twenty thouſand men, and Sylla was in the number of his officers. The Cimbri formed with their infantry an immenſe ſquare battalion: their cavalry, conſiſting of fifteen thouſand men, was magnificently mounted; each ſoldier bore upon his helmet the head of ſome ſavage beaſt, with its mouth gaping wide; an iron cuiraſs covered his body, and he carried a long halberd in his hand. The extreme heat of the weather was very favourable to the Romans. They had been careful to get the ſun on their backs; while the Cimbri little accuſtomed to its violence, had it in their faces. Beſides this, the duſt hid from the eyes of the Romans the aſtoniſhing multitude of their enemies, ſo that they fought with the more confidence, and of courſe more courage. The Cimbri, exhauſted and diſpirited, were quickly routed. A precaution, which they had taken to prevent their being diſperſed, only ſerved to forward their ruin: they had linked the ſoldiers of the foremoſt ranks to one another with chains; in theſe they were entangled, and thereby expoſed the more to the blows of the Romans. Such as could fly, met with new dangers

dangers in their camp; for their women who sat upon their chariots, clothed in black, received them as enemies, and massacred without distinction their fathers, brothers and husbands: they even carried their rage to such a height, as to dash out the brains of their children; and compleated the tragedy, by throwing themselves under their chariot wheels. After their example, their husbands in despair turned their arms against one another, and seemed to join with the Romans in promoting their own defeat. In the dreadful slaughter of that day, a hundred and twenty thousand are said to have perished; and if we except a few families of the Cimbri, which remained in their own country, and a small number who escaped, one may say, that this fierce and valiant nation was all mowed down at one single stroke. This last victory procured Marius the honours of a triumph, and the services he thereby rendered the commonwealth appeared so great, that he received the glorious title of third founder of Rome.

Thus have we given in a few words what historians relate of the expedition of the Cimbri; it drew upon them for a moment, the attention of all Europe. But as literature, and the fine arts, can alone give lasting fame to a nation, and as we easily lose the remembrance of those evils we no longer fear, this torrent was no sooner withdrawn within its ancient bounds, but the Romans themselves lost sight of it, so that we scarcely find any farther mention of the Cimbri in any of their writers. Strabo only informs us, that

that they afterwards ſought the friendſhip of Auguſtus, and ſent for a preſent a vaſe, which they made uſe of in their ſacrifices; and Tacitus tells us, in one word *, that the Cimbri had nothing left but a celebrated name, and a reputation as ancient as it was extenſive.

Thus whatever figure this expedition made, we know but little the more of the nation which ſent it forth. Nevertheleſs, what is related of their tall ſtature and ferocity deſerves to be remarked, becauſe if we may believe all the ancient hiſtorians of the north, and even many among the moderns, Scandinavia was peopled only with giants in thoſe remote ages, which precede the epoch of hiſtory. The Icelandic mythology, which I ſhall have more than once occaſion to quote, relates very exactly all the engagements which the giants had with thoſe Scythians, whom Odin brought with him out of Aſia.

They pretend that this monſtrous race ſubſiſted for a long time in the mountains and foreſts of Norway, where they continued even down to the ninth century; that they fled from the open day, and renounced all commerce with men, living only with thoſe of their own ſpecies in the ſolitudes and cliffs of the rocks; that they fed on human fleſh, and clothed themſelves in the raw ſkins of wild beaſts; that they were ſo ſkilled in magic, as to be able to faſcinate the eyes.

* *Parva nunc civitas, ſed gloria ingens, veteriſque famæ late veſtigia manent.* Tacit. Germ. c. 37.

eyes of men, and prevent them from feeing the objects before them; yet were at the fame time fuch religious obfervers of their word, that their fidelity hath paffed into a proverb *; that in procefs of time, they intermixed with the women of our fpecies, and produced demi-giants, who approached nearer and nearer to the human race, at length became mere men, like ourfelves †. If all thefe circumftances are compared and examined, we fhall find no great difficulty in clearing up the truth. When Odin and his companions came to eftablifh themfelves in the north, there is no doubt but the Cimbri, or original inhabitants of the country would ftoutly difpute the poffeffion of it with them. Afterwards, when they were conquered and driven out, the remains of this barbarous nation would be apt to take refuge among the rocks and defarts, where their rough and favage way of living ‡ could not but increafe their native ferocity. The fear of being difcovered by the conquerors, reduced them to the neceffity of feeking by night the only

* *Trollorum Fides.*

† TORE. Hift. Norveg. Tom. 1. Lib. 3. cap. 4. ARNG. JON. Crymogria. Lib. 1. p. 44.

‡ The Afiatics brought with them into the north, a degree of luxury and magnificence, which were before unknown there. The author of an old Iflandic chronicle, intitled LANDNAMA-SAGA, fpeaking of a certain perfon, fays, "that he was fo well clothed, that "you would take him for one of "the [ASES] Afiatics." P. 3. cap. 10. p. 102. apud Sperling. in nov. liter. M. B. an. 1699. M. Jun. Hence proceeded their contempt for the ancient inhabitants of the country, who were worfe clad and lefs civilized than themfelves.

only proviſions that were left them; and as their tallneſs of ſtature, their cloathing of ſkins, and their ſavage air could not fail ſometimes to make their conquerors tremble; that hatred which is always mixed with fear, may have given birth to the charge of their being canibals and magicians. Exceſs of fear faſcinates and dazzles the ſight more certainly than the ſorceries of which they were accuſed: and their enemies may have encouraged this opinion partly through ſuperſtition, and partly to ſet off their own courage. The probity for which this people was ſo famous, proves pretty plainly that the picture was over-charged. In proceſs of time, the ſubject of theſe ancient wars was forgotten; love performed the office of mediator between both people, their mutual ſhyneſs inſenſibly wore off, and as ſoon as they began to ſee one another more nearly, all theſe prodigies vaniſhed away.

After all, I do not pretend to decide whether the firſt inhabitants of theſe countries were all of them, without any mixture, of Germanic origin, Cimbri and Teutones. For although to me this appears very probable with regard to Denmark, it cannot be denied that the Finns and Laplanders anciently poſſeſſed a much more conſiderable part of Scandinavia than they do at preſent. This was the opinion of Grotius and Leibnitz. According to them, theſe people were formerly ſpread over the ſouthern parts of Norway and Sweden, whence in proceſs of time, they have been driven out by new colonies of Scythians and

 Germans,

Germans, and baniſhed among the northern rocks; in like manner as the ancient inhabitants of Britain have been diſpoſſeſſed by the Saxons of the greateſt and moſt pleaſant part of their iſland, and conſtrained to conceal themſelves among the mountains in Wales, where to this day, they retain their language, and preſerve ſome traces of their ancient manners. But whether the Finlanders were formerly the intire poſſeſſors of Scandinavia, or were only ſomewhat more numerous than they are at preſent, it is very certain that this nation hath been eſtabliſhed there from the earlieſt ages, and hath always differed from the other inhabitants of the north, by features ſo ſtrong and remarkable, that we muſt acknowledge their original to be as different from that of the others, as it is utterly unknown to us. The language of the Finns hath nothing in common with that of any neighbouring people, neither doth it reſemble any dialect of the ancient 'Gothic,' Celtic or Sarmatian tongues, which were formerly the only ones that prevailed among the barbarous people of Europe. The learned, who have taken the pains to compare the great Finland bible printed at Abo, with a multitude of others, could never find the leaſt reſemblance between this and any other known language *; ſo that after

* Stiernhelm, a learned Swede, thought he diſcovered in the Finland tongue, many Hungarian words, and ſtill more Greek ones. (Vid. Præfat. in Evangel. Gothica 1671. 4to.) But what the author ſays

after all their refearches on this head, they have been obliged to propofe mere conjectures, among which mankind are divided according to the particular light in which every one views the fubject.

fays above, may be notwithftanding true of the general ftructure of the language; and Stiernhelm was probably fanciful. T.

CHAP.

CHAPTER III.

The grounds of the ancient hiſtory of Denmark, and of the different opinions concerning it.

ON whatever ſide we direct our inquiries concerning the firſt inhabitants of Denmark, I believe nothing certain can be added to the account given of them above. It is true, if we will take for our guides certain modern authors, our knowledge will not be confined within ſuch ſcanty limits. They will lead us ſtep by ſtep through an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of kings and judges, up to the firſt ages of the world, or at leaſt to the deluge: and there, receiving the deſcendants of Noah, as ſoon as they ſet foot out of the ark, will conduct them acroſs the vaſt extent of deſerts into Scandinavia, in order to found thoſe ſtates and kingdoms which ſubſiſt at preſent. Such is the ſcheme of Petreius, Lyſchander, and other authors, who have followed what is called, among Daniſh

Daniſh hiſtorians, the Gothlandic hypotheſis *, becauſe it is built upon ſome pretended monuments found in the iſle of Gothland on the coaſt of Sweden: monuments which bear ſo many marks of impoſition, that at preſent they are by common conſent thrown aſide among the moſt ill-concerted impoſtures.

The celebrated Rudbeck, a learned Swede, zealous for the glory of his countrymen, hath endeavoured no leſs to procure THEM the honour of a very remote original; as if, after all, it were of any conſequence, whether a people, who lived before us ſo many ages, and of whom we retain only a vain reſemblance of name, were poſſeſſed ſooner or later of thoſe countries, which we quietly enjoy at preſent. As this author joined to the moſt extenſive learning an imagination eminently fruitful, he wanted none of the materials for erecting plauſible and frivolous ſyſtems. He hath found the art to apply to his own country a multitude of paſſages in ancient authors, who probably had never ſo much as heard of its name. According to him, Sweden is the Atlantis of which Plato ſpeaks,

* PETREIUS is a Daniſh author of the 16th century: LYSCHANDER was hiſtoriographer to king Chriſtian IV. His work, printed in Denmark at Copenhagen in 1662, bears this title: "An abridgment of the Daniſh hiſtories from the beginning of the world to our own times." The arguments on which theſe authors found their accounts did not merit the pains, which Torfaeus and others have taken to refute them. The reader may conſult, on this ſubject, the laſt-cited writer in his "Series of kings of Denmark." Lib. i. c. 8.

ſpeaks, and for this reaſon he aſſumed that word for the title of his book. He makes no doubt but Japhet himſelf came thither with his family, and he undertakes to prove the antiquity of the Scandinavians by the expeditions, which according to him they have undertaken in the remoteſt ages *. The firſt of theſe he places in the time of Serug, in the year of the world 1900: the ſecond under the direction of Hercules in the interval between the years 2200, and 2500. He lays great ſtreſs upon the conformity which is found between the names, manners and cuſtoms of certain nations of the South and thoſe of the North, to prove that the former had been ſubdued by the latter; which he affirms could never have been done, if Scandinavia had not been for a long time back overcharged, as it were, with the number of its inhabitants. It doubtleſs cannot be expected that I ſhould go out of my way to encounter ſuch an hypotheſis as this: it is very evident that Rudbeck and his followers have falſely attributed to the Goths of Scandinavia, whatever the Greek or Latin hiſtorians have ſaid of the Getae, or Goths, who dwelt near the Euxine ſea, and were doubtleſs the anceſtors of thoſe people, who afterwards founded colonies in the North. And as to the arguments brought from a reſemblance of names, we know how little theſe can be depended on. Proofs of this kind are eaſily found wherever they

* See Ol. Rudbeck. Atlantica, cap. xxxv.

they are ſought for, and never fail to offer themſelves in ſupport of any ſyſtem our heads are full of.

Having thus ſet aſide theſe two pretended guides, there only remains to chuſe between Saxo Grammaticus * and Thermod Torfæus. The firſt of theſe ſuppoſes that a certain perſon, named Dan, of whom we know nothing but that his father was named Humble, and his brother Angul, was the founder of the Daniſh monarchy, in the year of the world 2910: that from him Cimbria aſſumed the name of Denmark; and that it hath been ever ſince governed by his poſterity. Saxo himſelf takes care to give us, in his preface, the grounds on which his account is founded. Theſe are, firſt, the ancient hymns or ſongs, by

* Saxo, ſurnamed on account of his learning, Grammaticus, or The Grammarian, wrote about the middle of the 12th century, under the reigns of Valdemar the Firſt and Canute his ſon. He was provoſt of the cathedral church of Roſchild, then the capital of the kingdom. It was the celebrated Abſalon, archbiſhop of Lund, one of the greateſt men of his time, who engaged him to write the hiſtory of Denmark; for which he furniſhed him with various helps. Saxo's work is divided into XVI books, and hath been many times printed. Stephanius publiſhed a very good edition of it at Sora, in the year 1664, with notes which diſplay a great profuſion of learning. Sweno, the ſon of Aggo contemporary with Saxo, wrote alſo, at the ſame time, and by the command of the ſame prelate, a hiſtory of Denmark, which is ſtill extant. But this author ſeems rather to lean to the Icelandic hypotheſis; for he differs from Saxo in many eſſential points, and in particular concerning the founder of the monarchy, who, according to him, was Skiold the ſon of Odin, the ſame who, according to the Iſelandic chronicles, was the firſt king of Denmark.

by which the Danes formerly preserved the memory of the great exploits of their heroes, the wars and most remarkable events of each reign, and even sometimes the genealogies of princes and famous men. Secondly, the inscriptions which are found up and down in the North, engraven on rocks and other durable materials. He also lays great stress on the Icelandic chronicles; and on the relations which he received from archbishop Absalon. It cannot be denied but Saxo's work is written with great elegance for the time in which it was composed, but the rhetorician and the patriot are every where so apparent, as to make us sometimes distrust the fidelity of the historian. In short, to be convinced that this high antiquity, which he attributes to the Danish monarchy, is extremely uncertain, we need only examine the authorities on which he builds his hypothesis. Torfæus *, a native of Iceland, and historiographer of Norway, hath shewn this at large in his learned "Series of

* Thermodius Torfaeus, who was born in Iceland, in the last century, and died about the beginning of the present, had received his education at Copenhagen, and passed the greatest part of his life in Norway. He was a man of great integrity and diligence, and extremely conversant in the antiquities of the North, but perhaps a little two credulous, especially where he takes for his guides the ancient Icelandic historians, upon whose authority he hath filled the first volumes of his history of Norway with many incredible events. His treatise of the Series of the Princes and Kings of Denmark contains many curious researches, and seems to me to be his best work.

"of kings of Denmark." He there proves that thoſe ſongs, from which Saxo pretends to have extracted part of what he advanced, are in very ſmall number; that he can quote none of them for many entire books of his hiſtory; and that they cannot exhibit a chronological ſeries of kings, nor aſcertain the date of any one event. Nor could the inſcriptions, adds he, afford greater aſſiſtance to that hiſtorian; they contain very few matters of importance, they are for the moſt part eaten away with time, and are very difficult to underſtand *. With regard to the Icelandic chronicles, Torfæus thinks that they might have been of great uſe to Saxo, had he often conſulted them; but this, notwithſtanding his aſſertions, does not ſufficiently appear, ſince they rarely agree with his relations. Finally, the recitals of archbiſhop Abſalon are doubtleſs of great weight for the times near to thoſe, in which that learned prelate lived; but we do not ſee from whence he could have drawn any information of what paſſed a long time before him. Upon the

* Wormius had read almoſt all thoſe which are found in Denmark and Norway, as Verelius had alſo done the greateſt part of thoſe which ſubſiſted, in his time, in Sweden. Both of them agree, that they ſcarce throw any light upon ancient hiſtory. To be convinced of this, one need only to examine the copies and explanations they have given of them. See "Olai Wormii Monumenta "Runica." Lib. iv. and "Olai "Verelii Runagraphia Scandica "antiqua," &c.—Since Verelius's work, there hath been publiſhed a compleat collection of all the inſcriptions found in Sweden, by John Goransson; at Stockholm, 1750. Folio.

the whole, therefore, Torfæus concludes with reaſon, that Saxo's firſt books, that is to ſay, nearly half his hiſtory, ſcarce deſerve any credit ſo far as regards the ſucceſſion of the kings, and the dates of the principal events, although they abound with various paſſages, which contribute to throw light on the antiquities of the North. Having thus overturned the hypotheſis of that ancient hiſtorian, let us now ſee whether Torfæus is equally ſuccefsful in erecting a new one in its ſtead.

The knowledge which this learned man had of the old Icelandic language, enabled him to read a conſiderable number of ancient manuſcripts, which have been found in Iceland at different times, and of which the greateſt part relate to the hiſtory of that iſland and the neighbouring countries. After having carefully diſtinguiſhed thoſe which appeared to him moſt worthy of credit, from a multitude of others which ſtrongly favoured of fiction and romance, he thought he had found in the former, materials for drawing up a compleat Series of Daniſh kings, beginning with Skiold the ſon of Odin, who, according to him, began his reign a ſhort time before the birth of Chriſt. Thus he not only cuts off from hiſtory all the reigns which, according to Saxo, preceded that æra; but he changes alſo the order of the kings, which ſucceeded it; affirming that Saxo had one while inſerted foreign princes, another while lords or powerful vaſſals; that he had repreſented as living long before Chriſt ſome who did not reign till many years after; and that, in ſhort,

short, he hath viſibly enlarged his liſt of monarchs, whether with deſign to flatter his own nation by making the Daniſh monarchy one of the moſt ancient in the world, or whether he only too credulouſly followed the guides who ſeduced him.

It will appear pretty extraordinary to hear a hiſtorian of Denmark, cite for his authorities, the writers of Iceland, a country cut off, as it were, from the reſt of the world, and lying almoſt under the northern pole. But this wonder, adds Torfæus, will ceaſe, when the reader ſhall be informed, that from the earlieſt times the inhabitants of that iſland have had a particular fondneſs for hiſtory, and that from among them have ſprung thoſe poets, who, under the name of SCALDS, rendered themſelves ſo famous throughout the North for their ſongs, and for the credit they enjoyed with kings and people. In effect, the Icelanders have always taken great care to preſerve the remembrance of every remarkable event that happened not only at home, but among their neighbours the Norwegians, the Danes, the Swedes, the Scots, the Engliſh, the Greenlanders, &c. The firſt inhabitants of Iceland were a colony of Norwegians, who, withdraw themſelves from the tyranny of Harold arfagre *, retired thither in the year 874; and theſe ight carry with them the verſes and other hiſtorical onuments of former times. Beſides, they kept up ſuch

* HARFAGRE is ſynonimous to our Engliſh FAIRFAX, and ſignifies IR LOCKS. T.

ſuch a conſtant intercourſe with the other people of the North, that they could readily learn from them whatever paſſed abroad. We muſt add, that the odes of theſe Icelandic Scalds were continually in every body's mouth, containing, if we may believe Torfaeus, the genealogies and exploits of kings, princes, and heroes: And as the poets did not forget to arrange them according to the order of time, it was not difficult for the Icelandic hiſtorians to compoſe afterwards, from ſuch memoirs, the chronicles they have left us.

Theſe are the grounds of Torfæus's ſyſtem: and one cannot help highly applauding the diligence and ſagacity of an author, who has thrown more light on the firſt ages of Daniſh hiſtory than any of his predeceſſors. At the ſame time, we muſt confeſs, that there ſtill remains much darkneſs and uncertainty upon this ſubject. For, although the annals of the Icelanders are, without contradiction, a much purer ſource than thoſe which Saxo had recourſe to; and although the reaſons alledged by Torfæus in their favour are of ſome weight; many perſons, after all, will hardly be perſuaded that we can thence draw ſuch exact and full information, as to form a compleat and firm thread of hiſtory. For, in the firſt place, the Icelandic writers have left us a great number of pieces which evidently ſhew that their taſte inclined them to deal in the marvelous, in allegory, and even in that kind of narrations, in which truth is deſignedly blended with fable. Torfæus himſelf con-

ſeſſes

feſſes * that there are many of their books, in which it is difficult to diſtinguiſh truth from falſhood, and that there are ſcarce any of them but what contain ſome degree of fiction. In following ſuch guides, there is great danger of being ſometimes miſled. In the ſecond place, theſe annals are of no great antiquity: we have none that were written before chriſtianity was eſtabliſhed in the North: now, between the time of Odin, whoſe arrival in the North, according to Torfæus, is the firſt epoch of hiſtory, and that of the earlieſt Icelandic hiſtorian, elapſed about eleven centuries †. And therefore, if the compilers of the Icelandic annals found no written memoirs earlier than

* See his Series Dynaſt. et Reg. lib. i. cap. 6.

† This firſt Icelandic hiſtorian was ISLEIF, biſhop of Scalholt, or the ſouthern part of Iceland. He died in the year 1080. His collections are loſt, but there is room to believe that ARE, the prieſt, who is ſurnamed the SAGE, made uſe of them to compoſe his Chronicles, part of which are ſtill extant. This writer lived towards the end of the ſame century: as did alſo RAEMUND, ſurnamed the WISE or LEARNED, another Icelandic hiſtorian, ſome of whoſe works ſtill remain. He had compiled a very voluminous mythology, the loſs of which is much to be regretted, ſince what we have of it, which is only a very ſhort abridgment, throws ſo much light upon the ancient religion of the firſt inhabitants of Europe. SNORRO STURLESON is he of all their hiſtorians, whoſe works are moſt uſeful to us at preſent. He compoſed a Chronicle of the kings of Norway, which is exact as to the times near to his own. He was the chief magiſtrate or ſupreme judge of the kingdom of Iceland, and was ſlain in a popular inſurrection, in 1241. With regard to the other Icelandic hiſtorians, the reader may conſult Torfaeus's *Series Dynaſt. ac Regum Dan. lib. i.*

than their own, as we have great reaſon to believe, then their narratives are only ſounded on traditions, inſcriptions, or reliques of poetry.

But can one give much credit to traditions, which muſt have taken in ſo many ages, and have been preſerved by a people ſo ignorant? Do not we ſee that among the common claſs of men, a ſon remembers his father, knows ſomething of his grand-father, but never beſtows a thought on his more remote progenitors? With regard to inſcriptions, we have already ſeen what aſſiſtance they were likely to afford: we may add that there are very few of them which were written before the introduction of chriſtianity into the North; and, indeed, as we ſhall prove in the ſequel, before that time very little uſe was made of letters. Laſtly, as for the verſes or ſongs which were learnt by rote, it cannot be denied, but the Icelandic hiſtorians might receive great information from them, concerning times not very remote from their own. But was a rough and illiterate people likely to beſtow much care in preſerving a great number of poems, through a ſucceſſion of eight or nine centuries? Or can one expect to find in ſuch compoſitions much clearneſs and preciſion? Did the poets of thoſe rude ages obſerve that exactneſs and methodical order, which hiſtory demands? In the third place, if the Icelandic annaliſts could not know with certainty, what paſſed a long time before them in Iceland and Norway, muſt not their authority be ſtill weaker in what relates to a diſtant ſtate like that of Denmark; which

which doubtlefs in thofe times had not fuch intimate connections with the other countries of the North, as it hath had fince? We muft be fenfible, that almoft all that could be then known in Iceland of what paff-ed in other nations, confifted in popular rumours, and in a few fongs, which were handed about by means of fome Icelandic Scald, who returned from thence into his own country.

What courfe then ought an hiftorian to purfue, a-mid fuch a wide field of contrary opinions, where the momentary gleams of light do not enable him to dif-cover or trace out any certain truth? In the firft place, I think he ought not to engage himfelf and his readers in a labyrinth of entangled and ufelefs re-fearches; the refult of which, he is pretty fure, can be only doubt. In the next place, he is to pafs ra-pidly over all thofe ages which are but little known, and all fuch facts as cannot be fet clear from fiction. The intereft we take in paft events is weakened in proportion as they are remote and diftant. But when, befides being remote, they are alfo doubtful, uncon-nected, uncircumftantial and confufed, they vanifh in-to fuch obfcurity, that they neither can, nor ought to engage our attention. In thofe diftant periods, if any events occur, which ought not wholly to be paft over in filence, great care fhould be taken to mark the de-gree of probability which appears to be due to them, left we debafe hiftory by reducing it to one undiftin-guifhed mafs of truth and fable. It is true, by con-forming to this rule, an hiftorian will leave great chafms

chafms in his work, and the annals of eight or nine centuries which, in fome hands, fill up feveral volumes, will by this means be reduced within very few pages. But this chafm, if it be one, may be ufefully filled up. Inftead of difcuffing the doubtful facts which are fuppofed to have happened among the Northern nations, during the dark ages of paganifm, let us ftudy the religion, the character, the manners and cuftoms of the ancient inhabitants during thofe ages. Such a fubject, I fhould think, may intereft the learned, and even the philofopher. It will have to moft readers the charm of novelty, having been but imperfectly treated of in any modern language: and fo far from being foreign to the Hiftory of Denmark, it makes a very effential part of it. For why fhould hiftory be only a recital of battles, fieges, intrigues and negociations? And why fhould it contain merely a heap of petty facts and dates, rather than a juft picture of the opinions, cuftoms, and even inclinations of a people? By confining our inquiries to this fubject, we may with confidence confult thofe ancient annals, whofe authority is too weak to afcertain events. It is needlefs to obferve, that great light may be thrown on the character and fentiments of a nation, by thofe very books, whence we can learn nothing exact or connected of their hiftory. The moft credulous writer, he that has the greateft paffion for the marvelous, while he falfifies the hiftory of his contemporaries, paints their manners of life and modes of thinking, without perceiving it. His fimplicity, his ignorance,

are at once pledges of the artlefs truth of his drawing, and a warning to diftruft that of his relations *. This is doubtlefs the beft, if not the only ufe, we can make of thofe old reliques of poetry, which have efcaped the fhipwreck of time. The authors of thofe fragments, erected into hiftorians by fucceeding ages, have caufed ancient hiftory to degenerate into a mere tiffue of fables. To avoid this miftake, let us confider them only on the footing of poets, for they were in effect nothing elfe; let us principally attend to and copy thofe ftrokes, which, without their intending it, point out to us the notions, and mark the character of the ages in which they lived. Thefe are the moft certain truths we can find in their works, for they could not help delivering them whether they would or not.

* This is the opinion of the learned BARTHOLIN, who hath written with fo much erudition and judgment, upon certain points of the antiquities of Denmark. *Ad ritus*, fays he, *morefque antiquos eruendos, eos quoque evolvi poffe codices exiftimaverim, quos fabulofis interfperfos narrationibus, in hiftoria concinnanda haud tuto fequaris.* Vid. Thom. Barthol. de Cauf. &c. præfat.

CHAPTER IV.

Of Odin, his arrival in the North, his conqueſts, and the changes which he made.

BEFORE I deſcribe the ſtate of ancient Scandinavia, I muſt ſtop one moment. A celebrated tradition, confirmed by the poems of all the northern nations, by their chronicles, by inſtitutions and cuſtoms, ſome of which ſubſiſt to this day, informs us, that an extraordinary perſon named ODIN, formerly reigned in the north: that he made great changes in the government, manners and religion of thoſe countries; that he enjoyed there great authority, and had even divine honours paid him. All theſe are facts, which cannot be conteſted. As to what regards the original of this man, the country whence he came, the time in which he lived, and the other circumſtances of his life and death, they are ſo uncertain, that the moſt profound reſearches, the moſt ingenious conjectures

jectures about them, discover nothing to us but our own ignorance. Thus previously disposed to doubt, let those ancient authors, I have mentioned, relate the story: all their testimonies are comprized in that of SNORRO, the ancient historian of Norway, and in the commentaries and explications which TORFAEUS hath added to his narrative *.

The Roman Commonwealth was arrived to the highest pitch of power, and saw, all the then known world subject to its laws, when an unforeseen event raised up enemies against it, from the very bosom of the forests of Scythia, and on the banks of the Tanais. Mithridates, by flying, had drawn Pompey after him into those desarts. The king of Pontus sought there for refuge, and new means of vengeance. He hoped to arm against the ambition of Rome, all the barbarous nations his neighbours, whose liberty she threatened. He succeeded in this at first; but all those people, ill united as allies, ill-armed as soldiers, and still worse disciplined, were forced to yield to the genius of Pompey. ODIN is said to have been of this number. He was obliged to withdraw himself by flight from the vengeance of the Romans; and to go seek in countries unknown to his enemies, that safety which he could no longer find in his own. His true name was Sigge, son of Fridulph; but he assumed that of ODIN, who was the Supreme God among the Scythians:

* Vid. Snorro. Sturl. Chron. Norveg. in initio.—Torfæus Ser. Dynast. ac Reg. Dan. .11. p. 104. & seq.

Scythians: whether he did this in order to paſs among his followers for a man inſpired by the Gods, or becauſe he was chief-prieſt, and preſided over the worſhip paid to that Deity. We know that it was uſual with many nations to give their pontiffs the name of the God they worſhipped. Sigge, full of his ambitious projects, we may be aſſured, took care to avail himſelf of a title ſo proper to procure him reſpect among the people he meant to ſubject.

Odin, for ſo we ſhall hereafter call him, commanded the Aſes, a Scythian people, whoſe country muſt have been ſituated between the Pontus Euxinus, and the Caſpian ſea. Their principal city was ASGARD *. The

* The teſtimony of the Icelandic annaliſts is confirmed by that of ſeveral ancient authors, of whom it is not likely that they had any knowledge. Strabo places a city named Aſburg in the very ſame country. L. 2. Pliny ſpeaks of the Aſeens, a people ſeated at the foot of mount Taurus. L. 6. c. 17. Ptolemy calls them Aſiotes. Stephen of Byſantium intitles them Aſpurgians [*Aſpurgitani.*] Modern relations make mention alſo of a nation of Aſes or Oſſes ſeated in the ſame country; and there is reaſon to believe, that the city of Aſ-hof derived its name from the ſame ſource; this word ſignifies, in the Gothic language, the ſame as Aſgard, or Aſburg. [Vid. Bayer. in Act. Academ. Petropol. Tom. 9. p. 387. & Dalin. S. R. Hiſt. T. 1. p. 101, & ſeqq.] But notwithſtanding all this, it is ſtill doubtful whether Odin and his companions came ſo far. Snorro is probably the author of this conjecture founded on the ſimilitude of names. The moſt eminent chronicles, the poets, and tradition it is likely, ſaid only, that Odin came from the country of the Aſes: Now As in the Scythian language ſignifies a Lord, a God, and this name was in uſe among many Celtic nations. See Sueton. Aug. c. 97.

The worſhip there paid to their ſupreme God was famous throughout the circumjacent countries; and it was Odin that performed the functions of it in chief, aſſiſted by twelve other Pontiffs, (*Diar* or *Drottar*, a kind of Druids,) who alſo diſtributed juſtice *. Odin

c. 97. Aſ-gard then ſignifies the court or abode of God, and the reſemblance of this name may have deceived Snorro. The learned Eccard, in his Treatiſe of the Origin of the Germans, thinks that Odin came from ſome neighbouring country of Germany, where we find many names of places which are compounded of the word As, and it is poſſible that he may have ſojourned there a long time, and formed eſtabliſhments; though he or his nation came originally from ſome country of Scythia.

[Thus far our author in his ſecond edition: in his firſt edit. he had obſerved that there was a ſtriking reſemblance between ſeveral cuſtoms of the Georgians, as deſcribed by Chardin, and thoſe of certain Cantons of Norway and Sweden, which have beſt preſerved the ancient manners. The learned Biſhop Pontoppidan mentions ſeveral of theſe in his Nat. Hiſt. of Norway. Tom. 2. c. 10. §. 1, 2, 3. The Georgians (adds our author) poſſeſs at preſent one part of the country, which was inhabited by the Aſes, whom Odin conducted into the North.]

* Among the ſeveral nations to whom theſe men diſtributed juſtice, the TURKS are often mentioned in the Icelandic chronicles. There was in effect, at the foot of mount Taurus, a Scythian people from the earlieſt times known by that name. Pomponius Mela mentions them expreſsly; [Lib. 1. cap. 19. towards the end.] Herodotus himſelf ſeems to have had them in his eye. [Lib. iv. p. 22.] One part of the Turks followed Odin into the north, where their name had long been forgotten by their own deſcendants, when other off-ſhoots from the ſame root, over-ſpreading the oppoſite part of Europe, revived the name with new ſplendor, and gave it to one of the moſt powerful empires in the world. Such ſtrange revolutions have mankind in general undergone, and eſpecially ſuch of them as long led a wandering unſettled life.—*Firſt Edit.*

din having united under his banners the youth of the neighbouring nations, marched towards the north and weſt of Europe, ſubduing, we are told, all the people he found in his paſſage; and giving them to one or other of his ſons for ſubjects Thus Suarlami was made king over a part of Ruſſia: Baldeg over the weſtern parts of Saxony or Weſtphalia: Segdeg had eaſtern Saxony, and Sigge had Franconia. Many ſovereign families of the north are ſaid to be deſcended from theſe princes *. Thus Horſa and Hengiſt, the chiefs of thoſe Saxons, who conquered Britain in the fifth century, counted Odin or Woden † in the number of their anceſtors: it was the ſame with the other Anglo-Saxon princes; as well as the greateſt part of thoſe of Lower Germany and the north. But there is reaſon to ſuſpect that all theſe genealogies, which have given birth to ſo many inſipid panegyrics and frivolous reſearches, are founded upon a mere equivoque, or double meaning of the word Odin. This word ſignified, as we have ſeen above, the Supreme God of the Scythians, we know alſo that it was cuſtomary with all the heroes of theſe nations to ſpeak of

* Snorro Sturleſon. Chron. Norveg. p. 4.

† ODIN, in the dialect of the Anglo-Saxons, was called WODEN or WODAN. The ancient chronicles of this people, particularly that publiſhed by Gibſon, expreſsly aſſert that Hengiſt and Horſa were deſcended from him. We find there ten or twelve genealogies of the Engliſh princes traced up to the ſame ſource: and the author concludes with this reflection: "It is from Odin that all "our royal families derive their "deſcent." V. p. 13.

of themſelves as ſprung from their divinities, eſpecially their God of War. The hiſtorians of thoſe times, that is to ſay the poets, never failed to beſtow the ſame honour on all thoſe whoſe praiſes they ſung: and thus they multiplied the deſcendants of ODIN, or the ſupreme God, as much as ever they found convenient.

After having diſpoſed of ſo many countries, and confirmed and ſettled his new governments, Odin directed his courſe towards Scandinavia, paſſing through Cimbria, at preſent Holſtein and Jutland. Theſe provinces, exhauſted of inhabitants, made him no reſiſtance; and ſhortly after he paſſed into Funen, which ſubmitted as ſoon as ever he appeared. He is ſaid to have ſtaid a long time in this agreeable iſland, where he built the city of ODENSEE, which ſtill preſerves in its name the memory of its founder. Hence he extended his arms over all the north. He ſubdued the reſt of Denmark, and made his ſon Skiold be received there as king; a title, which according to the Icelandic annals, no perſon had ever borne before, and which paſſed to his deſcendants, called after his name Skioldungians *. Odin, who was apparently better pleaſed to give crowns to his children, than to wear them himſelf, afterwards paſſed into Sweden, where at that time reigned a prince named Gylfe, who, perſuaded

* If this name was not rather given them on account of the SHIELD, which they were accuſtomed to bear, for this is called SKIOLD in the Daniſh language to this day.—*Firſt Edit.*

fuaded that the author of a new worfhip, confecrated by conquefts fo brilliant, could not be of the ordinary race of mortals, paid him great honours, and even worfhipped him as a divinity. By favour of this opinion which the ignorance of that age led men eafily to embrace, Odin quickly acquired in Sweden the fame authority he had obtained in Denmark. The Swedes came in crowds to do him homage, and by common confent beftowed the regal title and office upon his fon Yngvon and his pofterity. Hence fprung the Ynlingians, a name by which the kings of Sweden were for a long time diftinguifhed. Gylfe died, or was forgotten. Odin governed with abfolute dominion. He enacted new laws, introduced the cuftoms of his own country; and eftablifhed at Sigtuna, (a city at prefent deftroyed, fituate in the fame province with Stockholm,) a fupreme council or tribunal, compofed of thofe twelve lords (*drottar*) mentioned above. Their bufinefs was to watch over the public weal, to diftribute juftice to the people, to prefide over the new worfhip, which Odin brought with him into the north, and to preferve faithfully the religious and magical fecrets which that prince depofited with them. He was quickly acknowledged as a fovereign and a God, by all the petty kings among whom Sweden was then divided; and he levied an impoft or poll-tax upon every head through the whole country. He engaged on his part to defend the inhabitants againft all their enemies, and to defray the

expence

expence of the worſhip rendered to the gods at Sigtuna.

Theſe great acquiſitions ſeem not however to have ſatisfied his ambition. The deſire of extending farther his religion, his authority and his glory, cauſed him to undertake the conqueſt of Norway. His good fortune or addreſs followed him thither, and this kingdom quickly obeyed a ſon of Odin named Sæmungve, whom they have taken care to make head of a family, the different branches of which reigned for a long time in that country. If all the ſons of Odin were to have been provided for in the ſame manner, all Europe would not have afforded them kingdoms; for according to ſome chronicles, he had twenty-eight by his wife Frigga*, and according to others, thirty-one or thirty-two.

After he had finiſhed theſe glorious atchievements, Odin retired into Sweden; where perceiving his end to draw near, he would not wait till the conſequences of a lingering diſeaſe ſhould put a period to that life, which he had ſo often bravely hazarded in the field: but aſſembling the friends and companions of his fortune, he gave himſelf nine wounds in the form of a circle with the point of a lance, and many other cuts in his ſkin with his ſword. As he was dying, he declared he was going back into Scythia to take his ſeat among the other Gods at an eternal banquet, where he would receive with great honours all who ſhould expoſe themſelves intrepidly in battle, and die bravely with their ſwords in their hands. As ſoon

as he had breathed his laſt, they carried his body to Sigtuna, where, conformably to a cuſtom introduced by him into the north, his body was burnt with much pomp and magnificence.

Such was the end of this man, whoſe death was as extraordinary as his life. The looſe ſketches which we have here given of his character, might afford room for many curious conjectures, if they could be depended on as well founded. Among thoſe which have been propoſed, there is nevertheleſs one which deſerves ſome attention. Several learned men have ſuppoſed that a deſire of being revenged on the Romans was the ruling principle of his whole conduct. Driven from his country by thoſe enemies of univerſal liberty, his reſentment, ſay they, was ſo much the more violent, as the Scythians eſteemed it a ſacred duty to revenge all injuries, eſpecially thoſe offered to their relations and country. He had no other view, according to them, in running through ſo many diſtant kingdoms, and in eſtabliſhing with ſo much zeal his ſanguinary doctrines, but to ſpirit up all nations againſt ſo formidable and odious a power. This leaven, which he left in the boſoms of the northern people, fermented a long time in ſecret; but the ſignal, they add, once given, they all fell as it were by common conſent upon this unhappy empire; and after many repeated ſhocks, entirely overturned it; thereby revenging the affront offered ſo many ages before to their founder.

I cannot

I cannot prevail on myſelf to raiſe objections againſt ſo ingenious a ſuppoſition. It gives ſo much importance to the hiſtory of the North, it renders that of all Europe ſo intereſting, and, if I may uſe the expreſſion, ſo poetical, that I cannot but admit theſe advantages as ſo many proofs in its favour. It muſt after all be confeſſed, that we can diſcover nothing very certain concerning Odin, but only this that he was the founder of a new Religion, before unknown to the rude and artleſs inhabitants of Scandinavia. I will not anſwer for the truth of the account given of his original: I only ſuſpect that at ſome period of time more or leſs early, either he, or his fathers, or the authors of his religion, came from ſome country of Scythia, or from the borders of Perſia. I may add, that the God, whoſe prophet or prieſt he pretended to be, was named Odin, and that the ignorance of ſucceeding ages confounded the Deity with his prieſt, compoſing out of the attributes of the one and the hiſtory of the other, a groſs medley, in which we can at preſent diſtinguiſh nothing very certain. New proofs of this confuſion will occur in all we ſhall hereafter produce on this ſubject; and it will behove the reader never to loſe ſight of this obſervation. I ſhall now mention ſome farther particulars recorded of Odin by the Icelandic writers; which will not only confirm what I have been ſaying, but give us ſome inſight into his character.

One of the artifices, which he employed with the greateſt ſucceſs, in order to conciliate the reſpect of the

the people, was to confult in all difficult emergencies the head of one MIMER, who in his life time had been in great reputation for his wifdom. This man's head having been cut off, Odin caufed it to be embalmed, and had the addrefs to perfuade the Scandinavians, that by his enchantments he had reftored to it the ufe of fpeech. He carried it every where about with him, and made it pronounce whatever oracles he wanted. This artifice reminds us of the Pigeon *, which brought to Mahomet the commands of heaven; and proves pretty plainly, that neither of thefe impoftors had to do with a very fubtle and difcerning people. We find another feature of great refemblance in their characters, and that is the eloquence, with which both of them are faid to have been gifted. The Icelandic chronicles paint out Odin as the moft perfuafive of men. They tell us, that nothing could refift the force of his words, that he fometimes enlivened his harangues with verfes, which he compofed extempore, and that he was not only a great poet, but that it was he who firft taught the art of poefy to the Scandinavians. He was alfo the inventor of the Runic characters, which fo long prevailed among that people. But what moft contributed to make him pafs for a God, was his fkill in magic. He perfuaded his followers, that he could run over the world in the twinkling of an eye, that he had the direction of the air

* Yet this is now proved to be a fiction. See Sale's Preface to the Koran. T.

air and tempeſts, that he could transform himſelf into all ſorts of ſhapes, could raiſe the dead, could foretel things to come, could by enchantments deprive his enemies of health and vigour, and diſcover all the treaſures concealed in the earth. The ſame authors add, that he alſo knew how to ſing airs ſo tender and melodious, that the very plains and mountains would open and expand with delight; and that the ghoſts attracted by the ſweetneſs of his ſongs, would leave their infernal caverns, and ſtand motionleſs about him.

But if his eloquence, together with his auguſt and venerable deportment, procured him love and reſpect in a calm and peaceable aſſembly, he was no leſs dreadful and furious in battle. He inſpired his enemies with ſuch terror, that they thought they could not deſcribe it better than by ſaying he rendered them blind and deaf; that he changed himſelf into the ſhape of a bear, a wild bull, or a lion; that he would appear like a wolf all deſperate; and biting his very ſhield for rage, would throw himſelf amidſt the oppoſing ranks, making round him the moſt horrible carnage, without receiving any wound himſelf.

Some later hiſtorians ſeem to be a good deal puzzled how to account for theſe prodigies. In my opinion, the only thing that ought to aſtoniſh us, would be the weak credulity of the people whom Odin was able ſo to impoſe upon, if ſo many examples, ancient and modern, had not taught us how far ignorance is able to degrade all the powers of the human mind. For why need we ſuppoſe this famous leader ever

really

really employed the pretended ſcience of magic, when we know in general that mankind hath been at all times and in all countries the dupes of the firſt impoſtor, who thought it worth his while to abuſe them; that the people who then inhabited Scandinavia were in particular plunged in the thickeſt clouds of ignorance; that the hiſtorians who have tranſmitted to us the accounts of all theſe prodigies were Poets, figurative and hyperbolical in their language, fond of the marvellous by profeſſion, and at that time diſpoſed to believe it by habit. That the reſemblance of names makes it very eaſy for us at this time to confound the deſcriptions given by ancient authors of their ſupreme Deity, with thoſe which characterize this Aſiatic Prince; and finally, that the latter bringing along with him arts before unknown in the North, a luxury and magnificence thought prodigious in that rude country, together with great ſubtilty, and perhaps other uncommon talents, might eaſily paſs for a God, at a time when there were ſo few real men; and when the number of prodigies could not but be great, ſince they called by that name whatever filled them with ſurpriſe and wonder.

CHAP.

CHAPTER V.

A general idea of the ancient religion of the northern nations.

IT is not easy to form an exact notion of the religion formerly professed in the north of Europe. What the Latin and Greek authors have written on this subject is commonly deficient in point of exactness. They had for many ages little or no intercourse with the inhabitants of these countries, whom they styled Barbarians; they were ignorant of their language, and, as most of these nations * made a scruple

* Particularly all those of Celtic origin. The author had expressed it simply "As all the Celtic "nations made a scruple," supposing the Gothic nations to be the same with the Celtic: but this opinion is considered in the preface.

ple of unfolding the grounds of their religious doctrines to ſtrangers, the latter, who were thereby reduced to be mere ſpectators of their outward forms of worſhip, could not eaſily enter into the ſpirit of it. And yet if we bring together the few ſhort ſketches which theſe different writers have preſerved of it, if we correct them by one another, if we compare their accounts with thoſe of the ancient poets and hiſtorians of theſe nations themſelves, I flatter myſelf, we ſhall throw light enough upon this ſubject to be able to diſtinguiſh the moſt important objects of it.

The religion of the Scythians was, in the firſt ages, extremely ſimple. It taught a few plain eaſy doctrines, and theſe ſeem to have comprized the whole of religion known to the firſt inhabitants of Europe. The farther back we aſcend to the æra of the creation, the more plainly we diſcover traces of this conformity among the ſeveral nations of the earth; but in proportion as we ſee them diſperſed to form diſtant ſettlements and colonies, they ſeem to ſwerve from their original ideas, and to aſſume new forms of religion. The nations, who ſettled in the ſouthern countries, were they who altered it the firſt, and afterwards disfigured it the moſt. Theſe people derive from their climate a lively, fruitful, and reſtleſs imagination, which makes them greedy of novelties and wonders: they have alſo ardent paſſions, which rarely ſuffer them to preſerve a rational freedom of mind, or to ſee things coolly and impartially. Hence the wild frenzies of the Egyptians, Syrians and Greeks

Greeks in religious matters; and hence that chaos of extravagances, in ſome reſpects ingenious, known by the name of mythology: through which we can hardly diſcover any traces of the ancient doctrines. And yet we do diſcover them, and can make it appear, that thoſe firſt doctrines, which the ſouthern nations ſo much diſguiſed, were the very ſame that compoſed for a long time after all the religion of the Scythians, and were preſerved in the North without any material alteration. There the rigour of the climate neceſſarily locks up the capricious deſires, confines the imagination, leſſens the number of the paſſions, as well as abates their violence, and by yielding only to painful and unremitted labour, wholly confines to material objects, that activity of mind which produces among men levity and diſquiet.

But whether theſe cauſes have not always operated with the ſame efficacy, or whether others more powerful have prevailed over them, the greateſt part of the Scythian nations, after having, for ſome time, continued inviolably attached to the religion of their firſt fathers, ſuffered it at length to be corrupted by an intermixture of ceremonies, ſome of them ridiculous, others cruel; in which, by little and little, as it commonly happens, they came to place the whole eſſence of religion. It is not eaſy to mark the preciſe time when this alteration happened, as well for want of ancient monuments, as becauſe it was introduced by imperceptible degrees, and at different times among different nations: but it is not therefore the

leſs certain, that we ought to diſtinguiſh two different epochs or ages in the religion of this people : and in each of theſe we ſhould be careful not to confound the opinions of the ſages, with the fables or mythology of the poets. Without theſe diſtinctions it is difficult to reconcile the different accounts, often in appearance contradictory, which we find in ancient authors. Yet I cannot promiſe to mark out preciſely, what belongs to each of theſe claſſes in particular. The lights which guide us at intervals through theſe dark ages, are barely ſufficient to ſhew us ſome of the more ſtriking objects ; but the finer links which connect and join them together, will generally eſcape us.

Let us, firſt of all, examine this religion in its purity. It taught the being of a "Supreme God, maſter of the univerſe, to whom all things were ſubmiſſive and obedient *." Such, according to Tacitus, was the ſupreme God of the Germans. The ancient Icelandic mythology calls him "The author of every thing that exiſteth ; the eternal, the ancient, the living and awful Being, the ſearcher into con-"cealed

* No doctrine was held in higher reverence among the ancient Germans than this. *Regnator omnium Deus, cætera ſubjecta atque parentia*, ſays Tacitus, ſpeaking of their religion. De Mor. Germ c. xxxv. The epithets that follow above are expreſsly given to the Deity in the old treatiſe of Icelandic mythology, intitled the EDDA, which has been mentioned above.

" cealed things, the Being that never changeth.'' It attributed to their deity " an infinite power, a bound- " lefs knowledge, an incorruptible juftice." It forbade them to reprefent this divinity under any corporeal form. They were not even to think of confining him within the inclofure of walls *, but were taught that it was only within woods and confecrated forefts, that they could ferve him properly. There he feemed to reign in filence, and to make himfelf felt by the refpect which he infpired. It was an injurious extravagance to attribute to this deity a human figure, to erect ftatues to him, to fuppofe him of any fex, or to reprefent him by images. From this fupreme God were fprung (as it were emanations of his divinity) an infinite number of fubaltern deities and genii, of which every part of the vifible world was the feat and temple. Thefe intelligences did not barely refide in each part of nature; they directed its operations, it was the organ or inftrument of their love or liberality

* *Cæterum nec cohibere parietibus Deos, neque in ullam humani oris fpeciem affimilare ex magnitudine cœleftium arbitrantur. Lucos ac nemora confecrant, Deorum quæ nominibus appellant fecretum illud quod folâ reverentiâ vident.* Tacit. Germ. c. ix. One might here bring together a great multitude of authorities to prove that fo long as thefe † nations had no communication with ftrangers, their religion feverely prohibited the ufe of temples, idols, images, &c. But it is fufficient to refer thofe, who would fee this fubject treated more at large, to M. Pelloutier's *Hiftoire des Celtes*, tom. ii.

† '*The Celtic nations.*' Orig.

rality to mankind. Each element was under the guidance of ſome Being peculiar to it. The earth, the water, the fire, the air, the ſun, moon, and ſtars had each their reſpective divinity. The trees, foreſts, rivers, mountains, rocks, winds, thunder and tempeſts had the ſame; and merited on that ſcore a religious worſhip, which, at firſt, could not be directed to the viſible object, but to the intelligence with which it was animated. The motive of this worſhip was the fear of a deity irritated by the ſins of men, but who, at the ſame time, was merciful, and capable of being appeaſed by prayer and repentance. They looked up to him as to the active principle, which, by uniting with the earth or paſſive principle, had produced men, animals, plants, and all viſible beings; they even believed that he was the only agent in nature who preſerves the ſeveral beings, and diſpoſes of all events. To ſerve this divinity with ſacrifices and prayers, to do no wrong to others, and to be brave and intrepid themſelves, were all the moral conſequences they drew from theſe doctrines. Laſtly, the belief of a future ſtate cemented and compleated the whole building. Cruel tortures were there reſerved for ſuch as deſpiſed theſe three fundamental precepts of morality, and joys without number and without end awaited every religious, juſt, and valiant man.

Theſe are the principal heads of that ancient religion, which probably prevailed for many ages through the greateſt part of the north of Europe, and doubtleſs among ſeveral nations of Aſia. It was preſerved tolerably

lerably pure in the North till towards the decline of the Roman republic: One may judge at leaſt by the teſtimony of ſeveral authors, that the Germans had maintained till that time the chief of theſe doctrines, whilſt the inhabitants of Spain, Gaul and Britain, half ſubdued by the arms and luxury of the Romans, adopted by degrees new Gods, at the ſame time that they received new maſters *. It is probable then, that it was not till the arrival of Odin in the North, that the Scythian religion among the ancient Danes and other Scandinavians began to loſe the moſt beautiful traits of its original purity. Though the fact itſelf is probable, it is not ſo eaſy to aſſign the cauſes of it. Whether this change muſt be attributed to the natural inconſtancy of mankind, and their invincible proneneſs to whatever is marvellous, and ſtrikes the ſenſes: Or whether we ought to throw the blame on that conqueror, and ſuppoſe with ſome authors that he had a formed deſign to paſs among the northern people for a formidable deity; and to found there a new worſhip, on which to eſtabliſh his new dominion, and to eternize his hatred for the Romans, by planting among thoſe valiant and populous nations a perpetual nurſery of devoted enemies to every thing that ſhould bear that name. It is difficult to decide this queſtion. The eye is loſt and bewildered, when it endeavours to trace out events ſo remote and obſcure. To unravel and diſtinguiſh the ſeveral cauſes, and to mark

* Pelloutier, chap. xvii.

mark exactly the diſtinct influence of each, is what we can hardly do in the hiſtory of ſuch ages as are the moſt enlightened and beſt known to us. Let us then confine ourſelves within more narrow limits, and endeavour to ſketch out a new picture of this ſame religion, as it was afterwards altered, and like a piece of cloth ſo profuſely overcharged with falſe ornaments, as hardly to ſhew the leaſt glimpſe of the original ground-work. This picture will take in a ſpace of ſeven or eight centuries, which intervened between the time of Odin and the converſion of Denmark to the Chriſtian faith. The Icelandic Edda, and ſome ancient pieces of poetry, wherein the ſame mythology is taught, are the ſources whence I ſhall draw my information. But the fear of falling into needleſs repetitions, prevents me at preſent from deſcribing the nature of theſe ancient works, which are known but to few of the learned. This diſcuſſion will find its moſt proper place in the article which I reſerve for the ancient literature of the North.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Religion which prevailed in the North, and particularly in Scandinavia, after the death of Odin.

THE moſt ſtriking alteration in the doctrines of the primitive religion, was in the number of the Gods who were to be worſhipped. A capital point among the Scythians, was that pre-eminence, I have been deſcribing, of one only all powerful and perfect being over all the other intelligences, with which univeral nature was peopled. The firm belief of a doctrine ſo reaſonable had ſuch influence on their minds, that they openly teſtified on ſeveral occaſions their hatred and contempt for the polytheiſm of thoſe nations, who treated them as Barbarians; and made it their firſt care to deſtroy all the objects of idolatrous worſhip in whatever place they eſtabliſhed their authority.

thority *. But the deſcendants of theſe people being, in all appearance, weary of this ſimplicity of religion, aſſociated to the ſupreme God many of thoſe Genii or ſubaltern divinities, who had been always ſubordinate to him. As theſe differed rather in degree of power, than in eſſence, the tranſition was very eaſy to a people who were not very refined and ſubtle. To this another reaſon alſo contributed. As each of theſe inferior divinities governed with abſolute power every thing within his reſpective ſphere; fear, deſire, all their wants, and paſſions inclined a rude people to have recourſe to them, as to a more preſent, ſpeedy and more acceſſible help in time of need, rather than to the ſupreme God, whoſe name alone imprinted ſo much reſpect and terror. It is an inevitable miſtake of the human mind to carry the imperfections of its own nature into the idea it forms of the Deity. The deep conviction we have every moment of our own weakneſs, prevents us from conceiving how it is poſſible for one ſingle being to move and ſupport all parts of the univerſe. This is eſpecially inconceivable to an ignorant people, who have never ſuſpected that there is any connection between the ſeveral parts of nature, and that a general mechaniſm can produce ſo many

* They demoliſhed the temples and ſtatues of their Gods: this was done by the Perſians (whoſe religion ſeems originally to have differed but little from that of the Scythians and 'Goths') when under the banners of Xerxes they entered Greece. See Cicero de legibus, L. 2.

many different phænomena. Accordingly, all barbarous nations have ever ſubſtituted, inſtead of the ſimple and uniform laws of nature which were unknown to them, the operation of ſpirits, genii and divinities of all kinds, and have given them as aſſiſtants to the ſupreme Being in the moral and phyſical government of the world. If they have paid to any of them greater honours than to others, it has uſually been to thoſe whoſe dominion extended over ſuch things as were moſt dear to them, or appeared moſt worthy of admiration. This was what happened in Scandinavia. In proceſs of time, that ſupreme Being, the idea of whom takes in all exiſtence, was reſtrained to one particular province, and paſſed among the generality of the inhabitants for the God of war. No object, in their opinion, could be more worthy his attention, nor more proper to ſhew forth his power. Hence thoſe frightful pictures which are left us of him in the Icelandic Mythology *, where he is always meant under the name of Odin. He is there called "The "terrible and ſevere God; the father of ſlaughter; "the God that carrieth deſolation and fire; the ac- "tive and roaring deity; he who giveth victory, and "reviveth courage in the conflict; who nameth thoſe "that are to be ſlain." The warriors who went to battle, made a vow to ſend him a certain number of ſouls, which they conſecrated to him; theſe ſouls were Odin's right, he received them in VALHALL, his

 ordinary

* See the EDDA, Mythol. 3. & ſeq.

ordinary place of refidence, where he rewarded all fuch as died fword in hand. There it was that he diftributed to them praifes and delight; there he received them at his table, where in a continual feaft, as we fhall fee hereafter, the pleafures of thefe heroes confifted. The affiftance of this Deity was implored in every war that was undertaken; to him the vows of both parties were addreffed; and it was believed that he often defcended to intermix in the conflict himfelf, to inflame the fury of the combatants, to ftrike thofe who were to perifh, and to carry their fouls to his celeftial abodes.

This terrible Deity, who took fuch pleafure in fhedding the blood of men, was at the fame time, according to the Icelandic mythology, their father and creator. So eafily do grofs and prejudiced minds reconcile the moft glaring contradictions: this fame God, whom they ferved under a character that would make even a man abhorred, according to the EDDA *, "liveth and governeth during the ages, he directeth "every thing which is high, and every thing which "is low, whatever is great, and whatever is fmall; "he hath made the heaven, the air, and man, who is "to live for ever: and before the heaven and the "earth exifted, this God lived already with the gi-"ants." The principal ftrokes of this picture are found many times repeated in the fame work. They have been frequently ufed by other northern poets.

Nor

* See Mythol. 3.

Nor were they peculiar to the inhabitants of Scandinavia. Many ancient people, the Scythians, and the Germans for example, attributed in like manner to the ſupreme God a ſuperintendance over war. They drew their gods by their own character, who loved nothing ſo much themſelves, as to diſplay their ſtrength and power in battle, and to ſignalize their vengeance upon their enemies by ſlaughter and deſolation. Without doubt, this idea had taken deep root in the minds of the ancient Danes before the arrival of Odin. The expedition of the Cimbri plainly ſhows, that war was already in thoſe early times become their ruling paſſion, and moſt important buſineſs: but it is nevertheleſs probable that this northern conqueror increaſed their natural ferocity, by infuſing into minds ſo prepared the ſanguinary doctrines of his religion. Without doubt, that intimate perſuaſion of theirs, that the ſupreme God appeared in battle; that he ſupported thoſe who defended themſelves with courage; that he fought for them himſelf; that he carried them away into heaven, and that this delightful abode was only open to ſuch as died like heroes, with other circumſtances of this kind was either the work of this ambitious prince, or only founded upon ſome events of his life, which they attributed to the ſupreme God, when they had once confounded them together *. The apotheoſis

* Abbe Banier ſays very ſenſibly, that we ſhould always diſtinguiſh in the Gods of Antiquity, thoſe whoſe worſhip has been antecedent

apotheosis of this Chief and his companions which followed it, involves the hiſtory of thoſe times in great obſcurity. The Icelandic mythology never diſtinguiſhes the ſupreme Being, who had been adored in the north under the name of Odin many ages before, from this prince of the ASES, who uſurped his name and worſhip. All that one can juſt make ſhift to diſcover amidſt ſo much darkneſs, is that the Scandinavians were not ſeduced by the impoſtures of the Aſiatic Odin ſo far as to be generally perſuaded, that he was the ſupreme God, whoſe name he had aſſumed, and to loſe all remembrance of the primary belief. I think one may conjecture that it was principally the poets who delighted to confound theſe two Odins for the better adorning the pictures they drew of them both *. Mention is ſometimes made of an ancient Odin, who never came out of Scythia, and who was very different from that other Odin that came into Sweden, and cauſed divine honours to be paid him at Sigtuna. Some authors make mention alſo of a third Odin, ſo that it is very poſſible this name may have been uſurped by many different warriors out of policy and ambition ; of

tecedent to the exiſtence of their great men, from thoſe who having been deified for ſome great actions, have been honoured with the ſame worſhip, as the Gods whoſe names they have taken. See his mythology, Vol. 3. Book 7. c. 2.

* Wormii Monumenta Danica. Lib. 1. p. 12. Therm. Torfoei Series Regum & Dynaſt. Dan. Lib. 2. c. 3.

of all whom posterity made in process of time but one single person ; much in the same manner as hath happened with regard to Hercules, in those rude ages when Greece and Italy were no less barbarous than the northern nations *. However that be, there remain to this day some traces of the worship paid to Odin in the name given by almost all the people of the north to the fourth day of the week, which was formerly consecrated to him. It is called by a name which signifies ODIN'S DAY †: For as this God was reputed also the author of magic, and inventor of all the arts, he was thought to answer to the Mercury of the Greeks and Romans, and the name of the day consecrated to him was expressed in Latin *Dies Mercurii* ‡.

The principal Deity among the ancient Danes, after ODIN, was FRIGGA or FREA, his wife. It was the opinion of all the 'Gothic' nations, of the ancient Syrians, and of the first inhabitants of Greece, that the supreme Being or celestial God had united with the Earth

* 'Several learned men have 'proved very clearly that the 'word HERCULES, was a name 'given to all the leaders of Colo-'nies, who came out of Asia to 'settle in Greece, Italy and Spain. 'May not one conjecture with 'some probability, that the name 'of ODIN was given in like man-'ner to all the leaders of Scythian 'colonies, who came from Asia to 'form settlements in the north ?'

† It is called in Icelandic *Wonsdag*, in Swedish *Odinsdag*, in Low Dutch, *Woensdag*, in Anglo-Saxon, *Wodensdag*, in English, *Wednesday*, that is, the DAY of WODEN or ODIN. Vide Junii Etymologicon Anglicanum. Fol. 1743. T.

‡ In French *Mecredi*.

Earth to produce the inferior divinities, man, and all other creatures. Upon this was founded that veneration they had for the Earth, which they confidered as a goddefs, and the honours which were paid her. They called her MOTHER EARTH, and MOTHER OF THE GODS. The Phenicians adored both thefe two principles under the names of TAUTES and ASTARTE. They were called by fome of the Scythian nations JUPITER and APIA; by the Thracians COTIS and BENDIS; by the inhabitants of Greece and Italy, SATURN and OPS. All antiquity is full of traces of this worfhip. which was formerly univerfal. We know that the Scythians adored the Earth as a goddefs, wife of the fupreme God; the Turks celebrated her in their hymns; the Perfians offered facrifices to her. Tacitus attributes the fame worfhip to the Germans, particularly to the inhabitants of the north of Germany. He fays, "They adore the goddefs HERTHUS *, (meaning the "EARTH,") and gives a circumftantial defcription of the ceremonies which were obferved in honour of her in an ifland, which he does not name, but which could not have been far from Denmark †. We cannot

* The name which Tacitus gives to this goddefs, fignifies the EARTH in all the northern (or Teutonic) languages. Thus it is in the ancient Gothic, *Airtha*: in the Anglo-Saxon, *Eorthe*, *Ertha*, *Hertha*: Englifh, *Earth*: in Danifh, *Jord*: in Belgic, *Aerde*, &c. Vid. Junii Etymolog. Anglican. T.

† Cluverius pretends that it is the ifle of RUGEN, which is in the Baltic fea, on the coaft of Pomerania. Germ. Antiq. p. 134. Yet as Tacitus places it in the ocean, it

not doubt, but this ſame goddeſs was the Frigga or Frea of the Scandinavians. The word FREA or FRAU * ſignifies a woman in the German language. When, therefore, the Aſiatic prince came into Denmark, and had found the worſhip of Odin and his wife the Earth eſtabliſhed, there is no doubt but the ſame people, who gave him the name of ODIN or God, gave his wife alſo the name of FREA, conſecrated to the Earth, and that they paid her the ſame compliment they had done her huſband. Thus the ſame confuſion which prevails in the deſcriptions given us of Odin, equally obtains in that of his wife; and without doubt the worſhip of both the one and the other underwent an alteration at this period. This Frea became, in the ſequel, the goddeſs of love and debauchery, the Venus of the north, doubtleſs becauſe ſhe paſſed for the principle of all fecundity, and for the mother of all exiſtence. It was ſhe that was addreſſed in order to obtain

it is more likely to have been the iſle of HEILIGELAND, which is not far from the mouth of the Elb. The ANGLES (*Angli*, from whom our Engliſh anceſtors derived their name) were ſeated on this coaſt: and Arnkiel hath ſhown in his Cimbric Antiquities, that the ancient Germans held this iſland in great veneration. The word *Heiligeland*, ſignifies "Holy Land." See Pelloutier's Hiſt. des Celtes. Tom. 2. Chap. 18.—Other learned men pretend that the iſle in queſtion was ZEALAND, but it is after all, not very certain or important. Vid. Mallet's Firſt Edit. T.

* The Lydians and other people of Aſia minor acknowledged her under the name of *Rhea*, which is doubtleſs the ſame as *Frea* with a different aſpiration. *Firſt Edit.*

tain happy marriages and eaſy child-births. She diſpenſed pleaſures, enjoyments and delights of all kinds. The Edda ſtiles her the moſt favourable of the goddeſſes; and in imitation of the Venus of the Greeks, who lived in the moſt tender union with Mars, Frea went to war as well as Odin, and divided with him the ſouls of the ſlain: and indeed it would have been very hard if the goddeſs of pleaſures had been deprived of an amuſement which her votaries were ſo fond of. It appears to have been the general opinion, that ſhe was the ſame with the Venus of the Greeks and Romans, ſince the ſixth day of the week which was conſecrated to her under the name of Freytag, Friday, or Frea's day, was rendered into Latin *Dies Veneris*, or Venus's day *.

The third principal deity of the ancient Scandinavians was named THOR, and was no leſs known than the former among the ' Gothic' nations. Julius Cæſar ſpeaks expreſsly of a God of the Gauls, who was charged with the conduct of the atmoſphere, and preſided over the winds and tempeſts †. He mentions him

* She was alſo known under the name of *Aſtagod* or the goddeſs of love, a name which is not very remote from that of *Aſtarte*, by which the Phenicians denoted her; and under that of *Goya*, which the ancient Greeks gave to the earth. She was ſometimes confounded with the Moon who was thought as well as her to have influence over the increaſe of the human ſpecies, for which reaſon the full moon was conſidered as the moſt favourable time for nuptials.

† Cæſar Comment. L. 6. c. 17.

him under the Latin name of Jupiter: But Lucan gives him a name, which bears a greater reſemblance to that of Thor, he calls him Taranis, a word which to this day in the Welſh language ſignifies thunder *. It plainly appears, and is the expreſs opinion of Adam of Bremen, that the authority of this God extended over the winds and ſeaſons, and particularly over thunder and lightning †. In the ſyſtem of the primitive Religion, the God Thor was probably only one of thoſe genii or ſubaltern divinities, ſprung from the union of Odin or the ſupreme Being, and the Earth. The Edda calls him expreſsly the moſt valiant of the ſons of Odin ‡, but I have not diſcovered that the employment of launching the thunder was ever attributed to him. In reading the Icelandic mythology, I find him rather conſidered as the defender and aven-

* Pellout. Hiſt. des Celtes. Lib. 3. c. 6.

† *Thor præſidet in aere; fulmina, fruges gubernat.* (Adam Brem. Hiſt. Eccles. c. 233.) Dudo de St. Quentin obſerves the ſame thing of the Normans and Goths, adding that they offered human ſacrifices. There was alſo a day conſecrated to Thor, which ſtill retains his name in the Daniſh, Swediſh, Engliſh, and Low-dutch languages. [e. g. Dan. *Thorſdag*, Sued. *Torſ-dag*. Eng. *Thurſday*. Belg. *Don-derdag*. Vide Jun. Etym.] This word has been rendered into Latin, by *Dies Jovis*, or Jupiter's day; for this Deity, according to ideas of the Romans alſo, was the God of Thunder. In conſequence of the ſame opinion, this day hath received a ſimilar name in the dialect of High-Germany. It is called there by a name compoſed of the word *Pen* or *Penning*, which ſignifies the ſummit of a mountain, and the God, who preſides (in that place) over thunder and tempeſt.

‡ Edda Mythol. 7.

ger of the Gods. He always carried a mace or club, which as often as he difcharged it, returned back to his hand of itfelf; he grafped it with gauntlets of iron, and was further poffeffed of a girdle which had the virtue to renew his ftrength as often as was needful. It was with thefe formidable arms that he overthrew to the ground the monfters and giants, when the Gods fent him to oppofe their enemies.

The three deities, whom we have mentioned, compofed the court or fupreme council of the gods, and were the principal objects of the worfhip and veneration of all the Scandinavians: but they were not all agreed among themfelves about the preference which was due to each of them in particular. The Danes feem to have paid the higheft honours to Odin. The inhabitants of Norway and Iceland appear to have been under the immediate protection of Thor: and the Swedes had chofen for their tutelar deity FREYA, or rather FREY, an inferior divinity, who, according to the Edda, prefided over the feafons of the year, and beftowed peace, fertility and riches. The number and employment of thefe deities of the fecond order, it is not very eafy to determine; and the matter befides, being of no great confequence, I fhall only point out fome of the moft material. The Edda * reckons up twelve gods, and as many goddeffes, to whom divine honours were due; and who, though they had all a certain power, were neverthelefs obliged to obey Odin

* Edda, Mythol. 18.

Odin the moſt ancient of the gods, and the great principle of all things. Such was NIORD *, the Neptune of the northern nations, who reigned over the ſea and winds. This was one of thoſe genii, whom the 'Goths' placed in the elements. The extent of his empire rendered him very reſpectable, and we find in the North, to this day, traces of the veneration which was there paid him. The Edda exhorts men to worſhip him with great devotion, for fear he ſhould do them miſchief: a motive like that which cauſed the Romans to erect temples to the FEVER: for fear is the moſt ſuperſtitious of all the paſſions †.

BALDER was another ſon of Odin, wiſe, eloquent, and endowed with ſuch great majeſty, that his very glances were bright and ſhining. TYR, who muſt be diſtinguiſhed from THOR, was alſo a warrior deity, and the protector of champions and brave men ‡. BRAGE preſided over eloquence and poetry. His wife, named IDUNA, had the care of certain apples, which the

* Mythol. 21.

† Niord was the father of that Frey, the patron of the Swedes, whom I have mentioned above, and of Freya the goddeſs of beauty and love, who hath been confounded with Frea or Frigga, the wife of Odin. See the Edda, 20. *Firſt Edit.*

‡ From *Tyr* is derived the name given to the third day of the week in moſt of the northern languages, viz. in Dan. *Tyrſdag* or *Tiiſdag*; Swed. *Tiſdag*; Engliſh, *Tueſday*; in Low Dutch, *Dingſ-tag*; in Latin, *Dies Martis*. This proves that *Tyr* anſwered to *Mars*. The Germans in High Dutch call this day *Erichs-tag*, from the word *Heric*, or *Harec*, a Warrior, which comes to the ſame thing.

the gods tafted, when they found themfelves grow old, and which had the power of inftantly reftoring them to youth *. HEIMDAL was their porter. The gods had made a bridge between heaven and earth: this bridge is the Rain-bow. Heimdal was employed to watch at one of the extremities of this bridge, for fear the giants fhould make ufe of it to get into heaven. It was a difficult matter to furprife him, for the gods had given him the faculty of fleeping more lightly than a bird, and of difcovering objects by day or night farther than the diftance of a hundred leagues. He had alfo an ear fo fine, that he could hear the very grafs grow in the meadows, and the wool on the backs of the fheep. He carried in the one hand a fword, and in the other a trumpet, the found of which could be heard through all the worlds. I fupprefs here the names of the other gods who made up the number of twelve; but I ought to beftow a word upon LOKE, whom the ancient Scandinavians feem to have regarded as their evil principle, and whom notwithftanding they ranked among the gods. The Edda † calls him " the calumniator of the gods, " the grand contriver of deceit and frauds, the re- " proach of gods and men. He is beautiful in his " figure, but his mind is evil, and his inclinations in- " conftant. No body renders him divine honours. " He furpaffes all mortals in the arts of perfidy and " craft." He hath had many children by SEGNIE his wife:

* Edda Mythol. 25.

† Mythol. 26.

wife: befides three monfters who owe their birth to him; the wolf Fenris, the ferpent Midgard, and Hela or Death. All three are enemies to the gods; who after various ftruggles, have chained this wolf till the laft day, when he fhall break loofe and devour the fun. The ferpent hath been caft into the fea, where he fhall remain till he is conquered by the god Thor. And Hela or Death fhall be banifhed into the lower regions, where fhe hath the government of nine worlds, into which fhe diftributes thofe who are fent to her. We find here and there in the Edda feveral other ftrokes concerning Loke, his wars with the gods, and efpecially with Thor; his frauds, their refentment againft him, and the vengeance they took of him, when he was feized and fhut up in a cavern formed of three keen-edged ftones, where he rages with fuch violence, that he caufes all the earthquakes that happen. He will remain there captive, adds the fame mythology, till the end of the ages; but then he fhall be flain by Heimdal, the door-keeper of the gods.

We have feen above that the Icelandic mythology reckons up twelve goddeffes, including Frea or Frigga, the fpoufe of Odin, and the chief of them all. Each of them hath her particular functions. Eira is the goddefs of medicine; Gefione of virginity: Fulla or Fylla is the confident of Frea, and takes care of her drefs and ornaments. Freya is favourable to lovers, but more faithful than the Grecian Venus, fhe weeps inceffantly for the abfence of her hufband Oderus, and her

her tears are drops of gold. LOFNA makes up differences between lovers and married perſons, though never ſo much at variance. VARA receives their oaths, and puniſhes ſuch as violate them. SNOTRA is the goddeſs of learning, and of good manners. GNA is the meſſenger of Frea. Beſides theſe twelve goddeſſes, there are other virgins in VALHALL, or the paradiſe of the heroes. Their buſineſs is to wait upon them, and they are called VALKERIES. Odin alſo employs them to chuſe in battles thoſe who are to periſh, and to make the victory incline to whatever ſide he pleaſes. The court of the gods is ordinarily kept under a great aſh-tree, and there they diſtribute juſtice *. This aſh is the greateſt of all trees; its branches cover the ſurface of the earth, its top reaches to the higheſt heaven, it is ſupported by three vaſt roots, one of which extends to the ninth world, or hell. An eagle, whoſe piercing eye diſcovers all things, perches upon its branches. A ſquirrel is continually running up and down it to bring news; while a parcel of ſerpents, faſtened to the trunk, endeavour to deſtroy him. From under one of the roots runs a fountain wherein Wiſdom lies concealed. From a neighbouring ſpring (the fountain of paſt things) three virgins are continually drawing a precious water, with which they water the aſh-tree: this water keeps up the beauty of its foliage, and after having refreſhed its leaves, falls back again to the earth, where it forms the

* See the EDDA: Mythol. 14.

the dew of which the bees make their honey. These three virgins always keep under the aſh; and it is they who diſpenſe the days and ages of men. Every man hath a Deſtiny appropriated to himſelf, who determines the duration and events of his life. But the three Deſtinies of more eſpecial note are URD (the paſt), WERANDI, (the preſent), and SCULDE, (the future).

Such were the principal deities, formerly worſhipped in the north of Europe: Or rather theſe were the ideas which the poets gave of them to that credulous people. It is eaſy to diſcover their handy-work in theſe fictions, ſometimes ingenious, but more frequently puerile, with which they thought to ſet off the ſimplicity of the ancient religion; and we ought not to believe, as we ſhall prove hereafter, that ſuch of them as were men of ſenſe and diſcernment ever conſidered them in any other light. But after having ſhewn the names and attributes of their principal Deities, let us proceed to ſet forth after the Edda and the poem named VOLUSPA *, the other Doctrines of their Religion.

We

* It is believed, that SAEMOND, ſurnamed the LEARNED, compiled a very extenſive Mythology, of which at preſent we have only an abridgment. We have ſtill three or four fragments of this firſt EDDA, the moſt valuable of which is a poem of about 400 verſes, which is ſtill extant, and entitled VOLUSPA, that is to ſay, "The Oracle of the Propheteſs." It contains an abſtract of all the northern Mythology, and appears very ancient; but is not every where eaſy to be underſtood.

We have feen that among the qualities of which they fuppofed Odin or the Supreme God to be poffeffed, that of the creator of heaven and earth is exprefsly attributed to him. It is very probable that moft of the nations which were of 'Gothic' race held opinions fimilar to this, although the few monuments which remain at prefent of the 'Gothic' religion, leave us ignorant in what manner their Druids or their philofophers conceived this great event to have happened. What the Icelandic mythology hath preferved to us on this head, merits fo much the more attention, as it difcovers to us the fentiments of the ancient Scythians on this important point, and at the fame time expreffes them frequently with a greatnefs and fublimity equal to the fineft ftrokes of claffical antiquity on the fame fubject *. The poet begins by a defcription of Chaos. "In the day-fpring of the "ages, fays he, there was neither fea, nor fhore, nor "refrefhing breezes. There was neither earth be-"low, nor heaven above to be diftinguifhed. The "whole was only one vaft abyfs without herb, and "without feeds. The fun had then no palace: the "ftars knew not their dwelling-places, the moon was "ignorant of her power." After this, continues he, "there

* I quote as much as poffible the very words of the VOLUSPA, and when they appear to me too obfcure, I fupply them from the EDDA, which is, for the moft part, only a kind of paraphrafe of this poem. See efpecially Mythol. 4, 5, & feq. Edd. Island. Refenii. Havniae, 1665. *First Edit.*

" there was a luminous, burning, flaming world to-
" wards the ſouth ; and from this world flowed out
" inceſſantly into the abyſs that lay towards the
" north, torrents of ſparkling fire, which in propor-
" tion as they removed far away from their ſource,
" congealed in their falling into the abyſs, and ſo
" filled it with ſcum and ice. Thus was the abyſs by
" little and little filled quite full : but there remain-
" ed within it a light and immoveable air, and thence
" exhaled icy vapours. Then a warm breath com-
" ing from the ſouth, melted thoſe vapours, and
" formed of them living drops, whence was born the
" giant YMER. It is reported, that whilſt he ſlept,
" an extraordinary ſweat under his arm-pits produ-
" ced a male and female, whence is ſprung the race
" of the giants ; a race evil and corrupt, as well as
" Ymer their author. Another race was brought
" forth, which formed alliances with that of the gi-
" ant Ymer : This was called the family of BOR, ſo
" named from the firſt of that family, who was the
" father of Odin. The ſons of Bor ſlew the giant
" Ymer, and the blood ran from his wounds in ſuch
" abundance, that it cauſed a general inundation,
" wherein periſhed all the giants, except only one,
" who ſaving himſelf in a bark, eſcaped with all his
" family. Then a new world was formed. The
" ſons of Bor, or the Gods, dragged the body of the
" giant into the abyſs, and of it made the earth : the
" ſea and rivers were compoſed of his blood ; the
" earth of his fleſh ; the great mountains of his

 " bones ;

" bones; the rocks of his teeth, and of ſplinters of " his bones broken. They made of his ſcull the " vault of heaven, which is ſupported by four dwarfs " named South, North, Eaſt, and Weſt. They fixed " there tapers to enlighten it, and aſſigned to other " fires certain ſpaces which they were to run thro', " ſome of them in heaven, others under the heaven: " The days were diſtinguiſhed, and the years were " numbered. They made the earth round, and ſur- " rounded it with the deep ocean, upon the banks of " which they placed the giants. One day, as the " ſons of Bor, or the gods, were taking a walk, they " found two pieces of wood floating upon the wa- " ter; theſe they took, and out of them made a man " and a woman. The eldeſt of the gods gave them " life and ſouls; the ſecond motion and knowledge; " the third the gift of ſpeech, hearing and ſight, to " which he added beauty and raiment. From this " man and this woman, named ASKUS and EMBLA, is " deſcended the race of men who are permitted to in- " habit the earth."

It is eaſy to trace out in this narration veſtiges of an ancient and general tradition, of which every ſect of paganiſm hath altered, adorned or ſuppreſſed many circumſtances, according to their own fancy, and which is now only to be found intire in the books of Moſes. Let the ſtrokes we have here produced be compared with the beginning of Heſiod's Theogony, with the mythology of ſome Aſiatic nations, and with the book of Geneſis, and we ſhall inſtantly be convin-

ced, that the conformity which is found between many circumftances of their recitals, cannot be the mere work of chance. Thus in the Edda the defcription of the Chaos; that vivifying breath which produces the giant Ymer; that fleep during which a male and female fpring from his fides; that race of the fons of the gods; that deluge which only one man efcapes, with his family, by means of a bark; that renewal of the world which fucceeds; that firft man and firft woman created by the gods, and who receive from them life and motion: all this feems to be only remains of a more ancient and more general belief, which the Scythians carried with them when they retired into the North, and which they altered more flowly than the other nations. One may difcover alfo in the very nature of thefe alterations the fame fpirit of allegory, the fame defire of accounting for all the phænomena of nature by fictions, which hath fuggefted to other nations the greateft part of the fables with which their theology is infected. To conclude, the ftyle itfelf, in which the expreffions, one while fublime, one while extravagant and gigantic, are thrown together without art; the littleneffes that accompany the moft magnificent defcriptions; the diforder of the narrative; the uniform turn of the phrafes, confirms to all who read this work, an idea of a very remote antiquity, and a mode of thinking and writing peculiar to a fimple and grofs people, who were unacquainted with any rules of compofition, and whofe vigorous imagination, defpifing or not knowing any

any rules of art, diſplays itſelf in all the freedom and energy of nature.

It was thus the world was created; or to expreſs it in a manner, more conformable to the 'Gothic' notions, It was thus that the matter already exiſting, but without order and without life, was animated and diſpoſed by the Gods into the preſent ſtate in which we behold it. I have already remarked, that they were far from ſuppoſing that after it had received the firſt motion from the hands of the Gods, the world continued to ſubſiſt, and to move independent of its firſt movers. Perhaps no religion ever attributed ſo much to a divine providence as that of the northern nations. This doctrine ſerved them for a key, as commodious, as it was univerſal, to unlock all the phænomena of nature without exception. The intelligencies united to different bodies, penetrated and moved them; and men needed not to look any farther than to them, to find the cauſe of every thing they obſerved in them. Thus entire Nature, animated and always moved immediately by one or more intelligent cauſes, was in their ſyſtem nothing more than the organ or inſtrument of the divinity, and became a kind of book in which they thought they could read his will, inclinations and deſigns. Hence that weakneſs formerly common to ſo many nations, and of which the traces ſtill ſubſiſt in many places, that makes them regard a thouſand indifferent phænomena, ſuch as the quivering of leaves, the crackling and colour of flames, the fall of thunderbolts, the flight or ſinging of a bird,

mens

mens involuntary motions, their dreams and visions, the movements of the pulse, &c. as intimations which God gives to wise men, of his will. Hence came oracles, divinations, auspices, presages, and lots; in a word, all that rubbish of dark superstitions, called at one time religion, at another magic, a science absurd to the eyes of reason, but suitable to the impatience and restlessness of our desires, and which only betrays the weakness of human nature, in promising to relieve it. Such, notwithstanding, was the principal consequence which the 'Gothic' nations drew from the doctrine of a Divine Providence. The ancient Danes carried it to as extravagant a pitch as the rest, as will appear from what I shall say of their sacrifices and presages, when I come to treat of their exterior worship. With respect to the moral precepts, we know very well that it hath ever been the failing of mankind to regard these as the least essential part of religion. When they admitted that continual and immediate action of the divinity on all creatures, the Scandinavians had thence concluded that it was impossible for men to effect any change in the course of things, or to resist the destinies. The Stoics themselves did not understand this term in a more rigorous sense than the people of the North. Nothing is more common in the ancient Chronicles than to hear their warriors complaining that the destinies are inflexible, that they are unalterable, and cannot be surmounted. We have seen above that they reckoned the Parcæ or Goddesses of destiny to be three in number

ber, as well as the Greeks; and like them attributed to them the determination of all events. Every man had alſo his own deſtiny, who aſſiſted at the moment of his birth, and marked before hand the period of his days *. It is yet probable that they conſidered Odin or the ſupreme God, as the author and arbiter of the deſtinies. This the Edda inſinuates pretty clearly, when it tells us, that he hath eſtabliſhed from the beginning governors to regulate the deſtinies of mortals. One may conceive what impreſſion this doctrine muſt have made upon men who were naturally warlike. Recent examples have ſhewn us, that it never fails among men to add ſtrength to their ruling paſſion, and to produce particularly in ſuch as love war, a blind temerity which knows neither meaſure nor danger †. But to this unlucky prejudice the ancient inhabitants of the north added another, the effects of which were no leſs barbarous: which was, that the term of a man's life might be prolonged, if any one would put himſelf in his place and die in his ſtead. This was often practiſed when a prince or illuſtrious warrior was ready to periſh by ſome accident;

* It is this doctrine of the ancient 'Gothic' (or northern) Mythology, which has produced all the ſtories of fairies, and the marvellous of modern Romances, as that of the ancient Romances, is founded on the Greek and Roman Mythology. This will appear more plainly in the ſequel of this work.

† The author (I ſuppoſe) alludes to Charles XII. of Sweden. See his Hiſtory by Voltaire. T.

dent; Odin appeaſed by ſuch a ſacrifice, and content to have a victim, revoked, they ſaid, the decree of the deſtinies, and lengthened the thread of HIS life whom they were ſo deſirous to ſave.

The other precepts of this religion * probably extended no farther than to be brave and intrepid in war, to ſerve the Gods, and to appeaſe them by ſacrifices; not to be unjuſt, to ſhow hoſpitality to ſtrangers, to keep their words inviolably, and to be faithful to the marriage bed. There are many remarks to be made upon the ſenſe in which theſe precepts were taken, and upon the manner in which they were obſerved; but to avoid repetitions, I ſhall reſerve them for the article in which I ſhall treat of the Manners of the ancient Danes: There we ſhall be beſt able to judge, what influence their religion had upon theſe people, and by a natural circle, thence form the moſt exact idea of the ſpirit of the religion itſelf. It is now time to diſcuſs another of its doctrines, that of the ſtate of man after death, and the final deſtiny of the world he now inhabits.

" There will come a time, ſays the Edda †, a bar-
" barous age, an age of the ſword, when iniquity
" ſhall infeſt the earth, when brothers ſhall ſtain
" themſelves

* As among all the 'Gothic' nations. Orig.

† See Mythol. 48. and 49. and the Poem of the VOLUSPA towards the end, as it is found in the Edit. of Reſenius. See alſo the fragments cited by Bartholin. De Cauſ. Contempt. a Dan. Gentil. mortis. L. 2. c 14.

" themſelves with brothers blood, when ſons ſhall be
" the murderers of their fathers, and fathers of their
" ſons, when inceſt and adultery ſhall be common,
" when no man ſhall ſpare his friend. Immediately
" ſhall ſucceed a deſolating winter; the ſnow ſhall
" fall from the four corners of the world, the winds
" ſhall blow with fury, the whole earth ſhall be hard
" bound in ice. Three ſuch winters ſhall paſs away,
" without being ſoftened by one ſummer. Then ſhall
" ſucceed aſtoniſhing prodigies: Then ſhall the mon-
" ſters break their chains and eſcape: the great Dra-
" gon ſhall roll himſelf in the ocean, and with his
" motions the earth ſhall be overflowed: the earth
" ſhall be ſhaken; the trees ſhall be torn up by the
" roots; the rocks ſhall be daſhed againſt each other.
" The Wolf Fenris, broke looſe from his chains, ſhall
" open his enormous mouth which reaches from hea-
" ven to earth; the fire ſhall flaſh out from his eyes
" and noſtrils; he ſhall devour the ſun: and the great
" Dragon who follows him, ſhall vomit forth upon
" the waters, and into the air, great torrents of ve-
" nom. In this confuſion the ſtars ſhall fly from their
" places, the heaven ſhall cleave aſunder, and the ar-
" my of evil Genii and Giants, conducted by SORTUR,
" (the black) and followed by LOKE, ſhall break in,
" to attack the gods. But HEIMDAL, the door-keep-
" er of the gods, riſes up, he ſounds his clanging
" trumpet; the gods awake and aſſemble; the great
" Aſh-tree ſhakes its branches; heaven and earth are
" full of horror and affright. The gods fly to arms;
" the

" the heroes place themſelves in battle-array. Odin " appears armed in his golden caſque, and his re- " ſplendent cuiraſs: his vaſt ſcimetar is in his hands. " He attacks the Wolf Fenris; he is devoured by " him, and Fenris periſhes at the ſame inſtant. Thor " is ſuffocated in the floods of venom which the Dra- " gon breathes forth as he expires. Loke and Heim- " dal mutually kill each other *. The fire conſumes

* It is very difficult to comprehend why the Scandinavians make their Gods to die thus, without ever returning again to life: For after the defeat of the three principal divinities, we ſee an All-powerful Deity appear upon the ſtage, who ſeems to have nothing in common with Odin. The Stoics had probably the ſame ideas: there is at leaſt a very remarkable paſſage of Seneca the tragedian on this ſubject. It is where he deſcribes that conflagration which is to put an end to this world.

Jam jam legibus obrutis
Mundo cum veniet dies
Auſtralis polus obruet
Quicquid per Lybiam jacet, &c.
Arctous polus obruet
Quicquid ſubjacet axibus.
Amiſſum trepidus polo
Titan excutiet diem.
Coeli regia concidens
Ortus atque obitus trahet
Atque *omnes pariter Deos*
Perdet mors aliqua, et Chaos
Et mors et fata noviſſima
In ſe conſtituet ſibi
Quis mundum capiet locus?

So

"every thing, and the flame reaches up to heaven.
"But presently after, a new earth springs forth from
"the bosom of the waves, adorned with green mea-
"dows; the fields there bring forth without cul-
"ture, calamities are there unknown, a palace is
"there raised more shining than the sun, all covered
"with gold. This is the place that the just will in-
"habit, and enjoy delights for evermore. Then the
"POWERFUL, the VALIANT, he WHO GOVERNS ALL
"THINGS, comes forth from his lofty abodes, to ren-
"der divine justice. He pronounces decrees. He
"establishes the sacred destinies which shall endure
"for ever. There is an abode remote from the sun,
"the gates of which face the North; poison rains
"there through a thousand openings: This place is
"all composed of the carcasses of Serpents: There
"run certain torrents, in which are plunged the per-
"jurers, assassins, and those who seduce married wo-
"men. A black winged Dragon flies incessantly a-
"round, and devours the bodies of the wretched who
"are there imprisoned."

Notwith-

So remarkable a conformity seems to suppose that the two systems had one common original, nor would it be astonishing if they had. There were among the barbarous nations Sages of great repute, as is acknowledged by the Greeks and Romans themselves, strongly prejudiced as they were against them: And it is very probable that more than one philosopher had picked up among the Scythians or Thracians, considerable information, especially with regard to religion and morality. *First Edit.*

Notwithſtanding the obſcurities which are found in theſe deſcriptions, we ſee that it was a doctrine rendered ſacred by the religion of the ancient Scandinavians, that the ſoul was immortal, and that there was a future ſtate reſerved for men, either happy or miſerable, according to their behaviour here below. All the ' Gothic and' Celtic nations held the ſame opinions, and it was upon theſe they founded the obligation of ſerving the Gods, and of being valiant in battle: But although the Greek and Latin hiſtorians who have ſpoke of this people, agree in attributing theſe notions to them, yet none of them have given any particular account of the nature of theſe doctrines; and one ought to regard in this reſpect the Icelandic mythology as a precious monument, without which we can know but very imperfectly this important part of the religion of our fathers. I muſt ſacrifice to brevity many reflections, which the picture I have here copied from thence, naturally preſents to the mind. Many in particular would ariſe on the ſurprizing conformity that there is between ſeveral of the foregoing ſtrokes, and thoſe employed in the Goſpel to deſcribe the ſame thing. A conformity ſo remarkable, that one ſhould be tempted to attribute it to the indiſcreet zeal of the Chriſtian writer who compiled this mythology, if the Edda alone had tranſmitted to us this prophecy concerning the laſt ages of the world, and if we did not find it with the ſame circumſtances in the VOLUSPA, a poem of greater antiquity,

quity, and in which nothing can be difcovered that has an air of interpolation, or forgery.

One remark, however, ought not to be omitted, which is, that this mythology exprefsly diftinguifhes TWO different abodes for the happy, and as many for the culpable: Which is what feveral authors who have writ of the ancient religion of Europe, have not fufficiently attended to. The firft of thefe abodes was the palace of Odin named VALHALLA, where that God received all fuch as died in a violent manner, from the beginning to the end of the world, that is, to the time of that univeral defolation of nature which was to be followed by a new creation, and what they called RAGNAROCKUR, or the Twilight of the Gods. The fecond, which after the renovation of all things, was to be their eternal abode, was named GIMLE, that is, the Palace covered with Gold, the defcription of which we have feen above, where the juft were to enjoy delights for ever. It was the fame as to the place of punifhments; they diftinguifhed two of thofe, of which the firft named NIFLHEIM *, was only to continue to the renovation of the world, and the fecond that fucceeded it, was to endure for ever. This laft was named NASTROND †: and we have feen in the defcription of the end of the world, what idea was entertained of it by the ancient Danes. With regard to the two firft places, the VALHALLA and NIFL-

HEIM,

* This word fignifies the abode of the wicked, from the island *Nifl*, evil, and *Heim*, home.

† The fhore of the dead.

HEIM, they are not only diſtinguiſhed from the others, in being only to endure till the conflagration of the world, but alſo in that they ſeem rather intended to reward violence than virtue, and rather to ſtifle all the ſocial affections than to deter men from crimes. Thoſe only, whoſe blood had been ſhed in battle, might aſpire to the pleaſures which Odin prepared for them in VALHALLA. The pleaſures which they expected after death, ſhew us plainly enough what they reliſhed during life. " The heroes, ſays the Ed-" da *, who are received into the palace of Odin, " have every day the pleaſure of arming themſelves, " of paſſing in review, of ranging themſelves in order " of battle, and of cutting one another in pieces; but " as ſoon as the hour of repaſt approaches, they re-" turn on horſeback all ſafe and ſound, back to the " Hall of Odin, and fall to eating and drinking. " Though the number of them cannot be counted, " the fleſh of the boar SERIMNER is ſufficient for " them all; every day it is ſerved up at table, and " every day it is renewed again intire: their beve-" rage is beer and mead; one ſingle goat, whoſe milk " is excellent mead, furniſhes enough of that liquor " to intoxicate all the heroes: their cups are the " ſkulls of enemies they have ſlain. Odin alone, who " ſits at a table by himſelf, drinks wine for his entire " liquor. A crowd of virgins wait upon the heroes " at table, and fill their cups as faſt as they empty " them."

* Edda Iceland. Mythol. 31, 33, 34, 35.

" them." Such was that happy ſtate, the bare hope of which rendered all the inhabitants of the North of Europe intrepid, and which made them not only to defy, but even ſeek with ardour the moſt cruel deaths. Accordingly, King Regner Lodbrog* when he was going to die, far from uttering groans, or forming complaints, expreſſed his joy by theſe verſes. " We 'are' cut to pieces with ſwords: but this fills " me with joy, when I think of the feaſt that is pre- " paring for me in Odin's palace. Quickly, quickly " ſeated in the ſplendid habitation of the Gods, we " ſhall drink beer out of the ſkulls of our enemies. " A brave man fears not to die. I ſhall utter no ti- " morous words as I enter the Hall of Odin." This fanatic hope derived additional force from the ignominy affixed to every kind of death but ſuch as was of a violent nature, and from the fear of being ſent after ſuch an exit into NIFLHEIM. This was a place conſiſting of nine worlds, reſerved for thoſe that died of diſeaſe or old age. HELA or Death, there exerciſed her deſpotic power; her palace was ANGUISH; her table FAMINE; her waiters were EXPECTATION and DELAY; the threſhold of her door was PRECIPICE; her bed LEANNESS: ſhe was livid and ghaſtly pale; and her very looks inſpired horror.

After this deſcription of the religion of the Scandinavians,

* See " Five Pieces of Runic " Poetry, tranſlated from the Icelandic." Lond. 1763. 8vo.— Olaii Wormii Literatur. Run. ad calc.

navians, can we be ſurprized that they ſhould make war their only buſineſs, and carry their valour to the utmoſt exceſſes of fanaticiſm. Such alſo will be the features which I ſhall moſt frequently have occaſion to preſent, when I come to give a picture of their manners: there the influence of a doctrine ſo pernicious will be felt in its utmoſt extent. But juſtice obliges me to obſerve here, that the reproach ariſing from it does not affect the ancient inhabitants of the North more than thoſe of all Europe in general, unleſs it be that they continued to deſerve it longer. However ſtrange to a man, who reaſons coolly, may appear the madneſs of making war habitually, for the ſake of war itſelf: it muſt, notwithſtanding, be allowed, that this hath been for a ſucceſſion of ages the favourite paſſion of all thoſe nations at preſent ſo polite; and it is but, as it were, of yeſterday that they began to be ſenſible of the value of peace, of the cultivation of arts, and of a government favourable to induſtry. The farther we look back towards their infancy, the more we ſee them occupied in war, divided among themſelves, cruelly bent on the deſtruction of each other, by a ſpirit of revenge, idleneſs and fanaticiſm. There was a time when the whole face of Europe preſented the ſame ſpectacle as the foreſts of America; viz. a thouſand little wandering nations, without cities or towns, or agriculture, or arts: having nothing to ſubſiſt on but a few herds, wild fruits and pillage, harraſſing themſelves inceſſantly by inroads and attacks, ſometimes conquering, ſometimes

conquered,

conquered, often totally overthrown and deſtroyed. The ſame cauſes every where produce the ſame effects: a ſavage life neceſſarily produces cruelty and injuſtice; diſquiet, idleneſs, and envy naturally lead to violence, and the deſire of rapine and miſchief. The fear of death is no reſtraint when life has no comfort. What evidently proves the unhappineſs of thoſe nations who live in ſuch a ſtate as this, is the facility with which they throw their lives away. The pleaſure ariſing from property, from ſentiment and knowledge, the fruits of induſtry, laws and arts, by ſoftening life, and endearing it to us, can alone give us a reliſh for peace and juſtice.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the exterior worſhip and religious ceremonies of the Northern nations.

IN laying open the principal doctrines of the ancient Danes, I have already had frequent occaſion to remark their conformity with thoſe of the other 'Gothic and' Celtic nations of Europe. The ſame conformity is obſervable in the worſhip which they paid the Deity; and one may preſume that it would appear ſtill greater if it were eaſy to purſue with exactneſs, the hiſtory of that religion through its ſeveral ſtages of purity and alteration. Thus, for inſtance, it is eaſy to comprehend why the ancient Danes made uſe of temples; although, on the other hand, it is very certain, that the uſe of them was proſcribed by

the primitive religion, which taught that it was offenfive to the gods to pretend to inclofe them within the circuit of walls; and that men thereby checked and reftrained their action, which is to penetrate all creatures freely in order to fupport them in being. There was doubtlefs a time, when the Danes, admitting the fame doctrine, worfhipped their divinities only in open air, and either knew not, or approved not of the ufe of temples. Although we want the greateft part of the monuments which might inftruct us concerning that ftage of their religion, the traces of it are not yet entirely deftroyed. We find at this day here and there in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, in the middle of a plain, or upon fome little hill, altars, around which they affembled to offer facrifices, and to affift at other religious ceremonies. The greateft part of thefe altars are raifed upon a little hill, either natural or artificial. Three long pieces of rock fet upright ferve for bafis to a great flat ftone, which forms the table of the altar. There is commonly a pretty large cavity under this altar, which might be intended to receive the blood of the victims; and they never fail to find ftones for ftriking fire fcattered round it; for no other fire, but fuch as was ftruck forth with a flint, was pure enough for fo holy a purpofe. Sometimes thefe rural altars are conftructed in a more magnificent manner; a double range of enormous ftones furround the altar and the little hill on which it is erected. In Zealand we fee one of this

kind;

kind *; which is formed of ſtones of a prodigious magnitude. Men would even now be afraid to undertake ſuch a work, notwithſtanding all the aſſiſtance of the mechanic powers which in thoſe times they wanted. What redoubles the aſtoniſhment is, that ſtones of that ſize are rarely to be ſeen throughout the iſland, and that they muſt have been brought from a great diſtance. What labour and perſeverance then muſt have been beſtowed upon theſe vaſt rude monuments, which are unhappily more durable than thoſe of the fine arts? But men in all ages have been perſuaded, that they could not pay greater honour to the Deity, than by making for him (if I may ſo expreſs it) a kind of ſtrong bulwarks; in executing prodigies of labour; in conſecrating to him immenſe riches. The ſacrifice of whatever is vicious in our paſſions, which he only requires of us for our own happineſs, is always the laſt thing that is thought of to offer to him, becauſe it is perhaps what is after all the moſt difficult. At Epheſus they diſplayed their devotion, by laying out upon one ſingle temple all the treaſures of Greece and Aſia. The Goths, whoſe bodily ſtrength was all their riches, ſhewed their zeal by rolling enormous rocks to the ſummits of hills.

In ſome places of Norway, are found grottos, which have alſo been employed for religious uſes. Some of them have been cut with incredible pains in the

* Vide Olai Wormii Monum. Danic.

the hardeſt rocks; others are formed of prodigious ſtones brought near and combined together with a force no leſs ſurpriſing *.

By degrees, as the Scandinavians formed new intercourſes and connections with the other nations of Europe, whether by the expeditions they undertook, or by the foreign colonies which came to eſtabliſh themſelves among them, their religion, changing by degrees, tolerated inſenſibly temples and idols, and at length adopted them without reſerve. The three principal nations of Scandinavia † vied with each other in erecting temples, but none were more famous than that of Upſal in Sweden. It glittered on all ſides with gold. A chain of the ſame metal (or at leaſt gilded) ran round the roof, although the circumference was not leſs than nine hundred ells. Hacon, earl of Norway, had built one near Drontheim, which was not inferior to that of Upſal. When Olaus, king of Norway, introduced the Chriſtian faith into that country, he cauſed this temple to be razed to the ground, and broke to pieces the idols it contained: They found there great riches, and particularly a ring of gold of great value. Iceland had alſo its temples, and the chronicles of that country ſpeak with admiration of two eſpecially, one ſituate in the north of the iſland, the other in the ſouth. In each of theſe temples, "there was," ſays an author of that country,

* Worm. Monum. Danic. lib. i. p. 6.

† Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

try *, "a private chapel, which was regarded as a "holy place: There they placed the idols upon a "kind of altar, around which they ranged the vic-"tims that were to be offered up. Another altar "ſtood oppoſite to it, plated with iron, in order that "the fire which was to burn there perpetually, "ſhould not damage it: Upon this altar was placed "a vaſe of braſs, in which they received the blood "of the victims: Beſide it ſtood a bruſh which they "made uſe of to ſprinkle the blood upon the by-"ſtanders. There hung up likewiſe a great ſilver "ring which they ſtained with blood, and which "whoever took an oath on any occaſion was requir-"ed to hold in his hand. In one of theſe temples, "there was alſo near the chapel a deep pit or well, "into which they caſt the victims."

When Denmark had embraced the Chriſtian faith, they applied themſelves with as much zeal to deſtroy theſe temples, as they had a little before to ſerve their falſe gods in them. In a ſhort time they were all razed to the ground, and the very remembrance of the places where they ſtood was totally loſt. But the altars that are very often found ſcattered upon the mountains and in the woods, teſtify at this day, that the ancient Danes were not leſs attached to this mode of worſhip † than the other northern nations.

All

* Vid. Arngrim. Jon. Crymogæa.

† Our author has here fallen into a ſmall inadvertency; for ſurely

All the gods whoſe names I have enumerated, and many others of inferior note, were worſhipped and invoked by the ancient Scandinavians, but not all in the ſame manner, nor on the ſame account. The great temple of Upſal ſeemed to be particularly conſecrated to the three ſuperior deities, and each of them was characterized by ſome particular ſymbol. ODIN was repreſented holding a ſword in his hand: THOR ſtood at the left hand of Odin, with a crown upon his head, a ſceptre in one hand, and a club in the other. Sometimes they painted him on a chariot, drawn by two he-goats of wood, with a ſilver bridle, and his head ſurrounded with ſtars. FRIGGA ſtood at the left hand of Thor; ſhe was repreſented of both ſexes (as an hermaphrodite) and with divers other attributes, which characterized the goddeſs of pleaſure. Odin was invoked as the god of battles and victory. Thor, as the governor of the ſeaſons, who diſpenſed rains, dry weather and fertility. Frigga as the goddeſs of pleaſures, of love and marriage. I do not here enter into a minute account of the worſhip rendered to the other gods: That which was paid to the three ſuperior deities conſiſted principally in ſacrifices, and deſerves to be deſcribed more at large.

There were three great religious feſtivals in the year. The firſt was celebrated at the winter ſolſtice. They

ſurely the ancient worſhip in TEMPLES is not proved by the altars found ſcattered in the WOODS and MOUNTAINS.

They called the night on which it was obſerved, the MOTHER-NIGHT, as that which produced all the reſt: and this epoch was rendered the more remarkable as they dated from thence the beginning of the year, which among the northern nations was computed from one winter ſolſtice to another, as the month was from one new moon to the next. This feaſt which was very conſiderable, was named IUUL *, and was celebrated in honour of THOR, or the ſun, in order to obtain a propitious year, and fruitful ſeaſons. Sacrifices, feaſting, dances, nocturnal aſſemblies, and all the demonſtrations of a moſt diſſolute joy, were then authorized by the general uſage: Theſe anſwered to the Saturnalia of the Romans, and were in a great meaſure renewed afterwards among the people, on occaſion of the feaſt of Chriſtmas. The ſecond feſtival was inſtituted in honour of the earth, or of the goddeſs GOYA or FRIGGA, to requeſt of her pleaſures, fruitfulneſs, and victory: And it was fixed at the firſt quarter of the ſecond moon of the year. The third, which ſeems to have been the moſt conſiderable in ancient times, was inſtituted in honour of ODIN; it was celebrated at the beginning of the ſpring, in order to welcome in that pleaſant ſeaſon, and eſpecially to obtain of the god of battles happy ſucceſs in their projected expeditions. There were alſo ſome feaſts in honour

* Hence is derived the word YEOL or YULE, [Ang. Sax. YEOL,] the old name for Chriſtmas. Vide Gloſſary of the Scott. lang. 1802. T.

honour of the other gods, and they were often multiplied on occafion of particular events.

In the earlieft ages, the offerings were fimple, and fuch as fhepherds and ruftics could prefent. They loaded the altars of the gods with the firft fruits of their crops, and the choiceft products of the earth: Afterwards they facrificed animals. They offered to Thor, during the feaft of IUUL, fat oxen and horfes; to Frigga the largeft hog they could get *; to Odin horfes, dogs, and falcons, fometimes cocks, and a fat bull. When they had once laid it down as a principle that the effufion of the blood of thefe animals appeafed the anger of the gods, and that their juftice turned afide upon the victims thofe ftrokes which were deftined for men; their great care then was for nothing more than to conciliate their favour by fo eafy a method. It is the nature of violent defires and exceffive fear to know no bounds, and therefore when they would afk for any favour which they ardently wifhed for, or would deprecate fome public calamity which they feared, the blood of animals was not deemed a price fufficient, but they began to fhed that of men. It is probable that this barbarous practice was formerly almoft univerfal, and that it is of a very remote antiquity: It was not entirely abolifhed among the northern nations till towards the ninth century, becaufe before that time they had not received the

* *Matrem Deûm venerantur Æftii: infigne fuperftitionis, formas aprorum geftant.* Tacit. Germ. c. 45.

the light of the gofpel, and were ignorant of thofe arts which had foftened the ferocity of the Romans and Greeks whilft they were ftill pagans.

The appointed time for thefe facrifices was always determined by another fuperftitious opinion which made the northern nations regard the number THREE as facred and particularly dear to the gods. Thus in every ninth month they renewed this bloody ceremony, which was to laft nine days, and every day they offered up nine living victims, whether men or animals. But the moft folemn facrifices were thofe which were offered at Upfal in Sweden every ninth year. Then the king, the fenate, and all the citizens of any diftinction, were obliged to appear in perfon, and to bring offerings, which were placed in the great temple defcribed above. Thofe who could not come themfelves, fent their prefents by others, or paid the value in money to priefts whofe bufinefs it was to receive the offerings. Strangers flocked there in crowds from all parts; and none were excluded except thofe whofe honour had fuffered fome ftain, and efpecially fuch as had been accufed of cowardice. Then they chofe among the captives in time of war, and among the flaves in time of peace, nine perfons to be facrificed: The choice was partly regulated by the opinion of the by-ftanders, and partly by lot. The wretches upon whom the lot fell, were treated with fuch honours by all the affembly, they were fo overwhelmed with careffes for the prefent, and with promifes for

the

the life to come, that they sometimes congratulated themselves on their destiny. But they did not always sacrifice such mean persons: In great calamities, in a pressing famine for example, if the people thought they had some pretext to impute the cause of it to their king, they even sacrificed him without hesitation, as the highest price with which they could purchase the divine favour. In this manner the first king * of VERMLAND was burnt in honour of Odin, to put an end to a great dearth; as we read in the history of Norway. The kings, in their turn, did not spare the blood of their subjects; and many of them even shed that of their children. Hacon, king of Norway, offered his son in sacrifice, to obtain of Odin the victory over his enemy Harald †. Aune, king of Sweden, devoted to Odin the blood of his nine sons, to prevail on that god to prolong his life ‡. The ancient history of the North abounds in similar examples. These abominable sacrifices were accompanied with various ceremonies. When the victim was chosen, they conducted him towards the altar where the sacred fire was kept burning night and day: It was surrounded with all sorts of iron and brazen vessels: Among them one was distinguished from the rest by its superior size; in this they received the blood of the victims. When they offered up animals, they speedily

* This was a petty king of a province of Sweden. See Wormius, in Monum. Dan. p. 25, 26.

† Saxo Grammat. lib. x.

‡ Worm. Monum. Danic. lib. i. p. 28.

ſpeedily killed them at the foot of the altar; then they opened their entrails to draw auguries from them, as among the Romans; afterwards they dreſſed the fleſh to be ſerved up in a feaſt prepared for the aſſembly. Even horſe fleſh was not rejected, and the grandees often eat of it as well as the people. But when they were diſpoſed to ſacrifice men, thoſe whom they pitched upon were laid upon a great ſtone, where they were inſtantly either ſtrangled or knocked on the head. Sometimes they let out the blood; for no preſage was more reſpected than that which they drew from the greater or leſs degree of impetuoſity with which the blood guſhed forth. Hence the prieſts inferred what ſucceſs would attend the enterprize which was the object of their ſacrifice. They alſo opened the body to read in the entrails, and eſpecially in the heart, the will of the gods, and the good or ill fortune that was impending. The bodies were afterwards burnt, or ſuſpended in a ſacred grove near the temple. Part of the blood was ſprinkled upon the people, part of it upon the ſacred grove; with the ſame they alſo bedewed the images of the gods, the altars, the benches and walls of the temple, both within and without.

Sometimes theſe ſacrifices were performed in another manner *. There was a deep well in the neighbourhood of the temple: The choſen perſon was thrown headlong in; commonly in honour of GOYA, or

* See Arngrim. Jonas in Crymogæa. lib. i.

or the EARTH. If he went at once to the bottom, the victim had proved agreeable to the goddeſs, and ſhe had received it: If it ſwam a long time upon the ſurface, ſhe refuſed it, and it was hung up in a ſacred foreſt. Near the temple of Upſal, there was a grove of this ſort, of which every tree and every leaf was regarded as the moſt ſacred thing in the world. This, which was named ODIN'S GROVE, was full of the bodies of men and animals who had been ſacrificed. They afterwards took them down to burn them in honour of Thor or the ſun: And they had no doubt that the holocauſt had proved agreeable, when the ſmoke aſcended very high. In whatever manner they immolated men, the prieſt always took care in conſecrating the victim to pronounce certain words, as, "I devote thee to Odin." "I ſend thee to Odin." Or, "I devote thee for a good harveſt; for the re-"turn of a fruitful ſeaſon." The ceremony concluded with feaſtings, in which they diſplayed all the magnificence known in thoſe times. They drank immoderately; the kings and chief lords drank firſt, healths in honour of the gods: Every one drank afterwards, making ſome vow or prayer to the god whom they named. Hence came that cuſtom among the firſt Chriſtians in Germany and the North, of drinking to the health of our Saviour, the apoſtles, and the ſaints: A cuſtom which the church was often obliged to tolerate. The licentiouſneſs of theſe feaſts at length increaſed to ſuch a pitch, as to become mere bacchanalian meetings, where, to the ſound of barbarous

muſic,

musfic, amidst shouts, dancing and indecent gestures, so many unseemly actions were committed, that the wisest men refused to assist at them.

The same kinds of sacrifices were offered, though perhaps with less splendour, in Denmark, Norway, and Iceland. Let us hear on this subject an historian of the eleventh century, Dithmar bishop of Merseburg *. " There is," says he, " in Zealand, a place " which is the capital of Denmark, named Lederun, " (this is now Lethra or Leyre, of which I shall speak " hereafter). At this place, every nine years, in the " month of January, the Danes flock together in " crowds, and offer to their gods ninety-nine men, as " many horses, dogs and cocks, with the certain hope " of appeasing the gods by these victims." Dudo of St. Quentin, a French historian, attributes the same practice to the Normans or Norwegians †: But he informs us, that it was in honour of Thor that these sacrifices were made. Arngrim Jonas, an Icelandic author, who hath writ with great learning upon the antiquities of his nation ‡, remarks, that there were formerly in Iceland, two temples in which they offered up human victims, and a famous pit or well in which they were thrown headlong. There are still in Friezland, and in several places of Germany, altars composed of such large stones that they could neither be destroyed by the ravages of time, nor by the

* Dithm. Merseburg. Chronic. lib. i p. 12.

† Dudo Quint. sub init.

‡ J Arngr. Crymog. lib. i. c. 7.

the zeal of the firſt converts to Chriſtianity. Theſe altars, according to the tradition of the inhabitants, and the reports of creditable hiſtorians, have ſerved for the ſame horrid purpoſes *. The Gauls for a long time offered men to their ſupreme god Esus, or Teutat †. The firſt inhabitants of Italy, and Sicily, the Britons, the Phenicians, the Carthaginians, and all the nations we know of in Europe and Aſia, have been covered with the ſame reproach. And can we wonder at it? Every nation buried in ignorance muſt inevitably fall into error, and from thence into fanaticiſm and cruelty. Men are born ſurrounded with dangers and evils, at the ſame time that they are weak and naked. If, as they grow up to manhood, the arts of civil life, and the ſecurity of laws do not diſperſe their fears, ſoften their diſpoſitions, and diffuſe through their minds, calmneſs, moderation, and the ſocial affections, they become a prey to a thouſand gloomy terrors, which paint out all nature to them as full of dangers and enemies, and keep them perpetually armed with ferocity and diſtruſt. Hence that thirſt of revenge and deſtruction which barbarous nations cannot lay aſide: Hence that impious prejudice which makes them imagine the gods to be as ſanguinary as themſelves. It is the unhappineſs of our nature, that ignorance ſuggeſts fear, and fear cruelty. They muſt therefore be very little acquainted with human

* Ubbo Emmius Hiſt. Friſ. lib. i. p. 21.

† This our author thinks was the ſame as Odin. T.

human nature, and ſtill leſs ſo with hiſtory, who place the golden age of any people in the age of its poverty and ignorance. It is ſo true that men are every where alike in this reſpect, that nations who have never had any commerce with thoſe of Europe, have run into the ſame exceſſes with equal fury. The Peruvians anciently offered human ſacrifices. The Mexicans once offered up to their gods, upon one ſingle occaſion, five thouſand priſoners of war. Multitudes of people, half-unknown and wandering in the deſerts of Africa, or foreſts of America, do to this day deſtroy each other, from the ſame principles and with the ſame blind fury.

The prieſts of theſe inhuman Gods were called DROTTES, a name which probably anſwers to the Gallic word DRUIDS: They were alſo frequently ſtyled Prophets, Wiſe Men, Divine Men. At Upſal each of the three ſuperior deities had their reſpective prieſts, the principal of whom to the number of twelve, preſided over the ſacrifices, and exerciſed an unlimited authority over every thing which ſeemed to have connection with religion. The reſpect ſhown them was ſuitable to this authority. Sprung for the moſt part from the ſame family *, like thoſe of the Jews, they perſuaded the people that this family had God

* Among the northern nations, ſays Diodorus Siculus, a family is charged (from father to ſon) with the care of the temples, and the worſhip of the gods. Hiſt. lib. ii. c. 47.

God himſelf for its founder *. They often united the prieſthood and the ſovereignty in their own perſons; after the example of Odin their legiſlator. And it was in conſequence of that cuſtom that in later times kings ſtill performed ſome functions of the prieſthood, or ſet apart their children for an office ſo highly revered. The goddeſs Frigga was uſually ſerved by kings daughters, whom they called PROPHETESSES and GODDESSES; theſe pronounced oracles, devoted themſelves to perpetual virginity, and kept up the ſacred fire in her temple. Tacitus informs us, that among the Germans, the power of inflicting pains and penalties, of ſtriking, and binding a criminal, was veſted in the prieſts alone. And theſe men ſo haughty, who thought themſelves diſhonoured if they did not revenge the ſlighteſt offence, would trembling ſubmit to blows, and even death itſelf from the hand of the pontiff, whom they took for the inſtrument of an angry deity †. In ſhort, the credulity of the people, and the craft and preſumption of the prieſt went ſo far, that theſe pretended interpreters of the Divine Will dared even to demand, in the name of heaven, the blood of kings themſelves; and they obtained it. To ſucceed in this, it was only requiſite for them to avail them-

ſelves

* Hence the appellation DRUIDS appears to be rather of Scandinavian or Teutonic than of Armorican or Welch origin; from *Drotten*, dominus; fidelis, &c. E.

* *Neque animadvertere, neque vincire, neque verberare niſi ſacerdotibus permiſſum, non ducis juſſu, ſed velut Deo imperante.* Tacit. Germ.

felves of thofe times of calamity, when the people, diftracted with forrow and fear, lay their minds open to the moft horrid impreffions. At thofe times, while the prince was flaughtered at one of the altars of the gods; the others were covered with offerings, which were heaped up on all fides for their minifters.

I have already obferved, that the ancient religion of the northern nations * made the deity to interpofe in the moft indifferent events, as well as the moft confiderable; and they only confidered the elements as fo many organs by which he manifefted his will and his refolves. This opinion once admitted, intereft or fuperftition quickly drew from thence a confequence natural enough: namely, that by ftudying with care the phænomena of nature, or, to fpeak in the fpirit of that religion, the vifible actions of that unfeen deity, men might come to know his will, inclinations, and defires: in one word, they entered into a kind of commerce with him; oracles, auguries, divinations, and a thoufand practices of that kind quickly fprung up in crowds, from this erroneous principle. Accordingly, in all our ancient fables and chronicles, we fee the northern nations extremely attached to this vain fcience. They had oracles like the people of Italy and Greece, and thefe oracles were not lefs revered, nor lefs famous than theirs. It was generally believed either that the gods and goddeffes, or, more commonly, that the three deftinies whofe names I have

* Celtic nations. Orig.

given elſewhere, delivered out theſe oracles in their temples. That of Upſal was as famous for its oracles as its ſacrifices. There were alſo celebrated ones in Dalia, a province of Sweden; in Norway and Denmark. "It was," ſays Saxo, the Grammarian, "a "cuſtom with the ancient Danes to conſult the oracles of the Parcæ, concerning the future deſtiny of "children newly born. Accordingly, Fridleif being "deſirous to know that of his ſon Olaus, entered in-"to the temple of the gods to pray; and being in-"troduced into the ſanctuary, he ſaw three goddeſſes "upon ſo many ſeats. The firſt, who was of a be-"neficent nature, granted the infant beauty, and the "gift of pleaſing. The ſecond gave him a noble "heart. But the third, who was envious and ſpite-"ful, to ſpoil the work of her ſiſters, imprinted on "him the ſtain of covetouſneſs." It ſhould ſeem that the idols or ſtatues themſelves of the gods and goddeſſes delivered theſe oracles *vivâ voce*. In an ancient Icelandic chronicle, we read of one Indrid, who went from home to wait for Thorſtein his enemy. "Thorſtein," ſays the author, "upon his arrival, "entered into the temple. In it was a ſtone (cut "probably into a ſtatue) which he had been accuſ-"tomed to worſhip; he proſtrated himſelf before it, "and prayed to it (to inform him of his deſtiny). "Indrid, who ſtood without, heard the ſtone chaunt "forth theſe verſes. "It is for the laſt time, it is "with feet drawing near to the grave, that thou art "come to this place: For it is moſt certain, that be-

"fore

" fore the sun ariseth, the valiant Indrid shall make " thee feel his hatred*." The people persuaded themselves sometimes that these idols answered by a gesture or a nod of the head, which signified that they hearkened to the prayers of their supplicants. Thus in the history of Olave Tryggeson, king of Norway, we see a lord named Hacon, who enters into a temple, and prostrates himself before an idol which held in its hand a great bracelet of gold. Hacon, adds the historian, easily conceiving, that so long as the idol would not part with the bracelet, it was not disposed to be reconciled to him, and having made some fruitless efforts to take the bracelet away, began to pray afresh, and to offer it presents: then getting up a second time, the idol loosed the bracelet, and he went away very well pleased. I shall not lose time in entering into a description of the other kinds of Oracles. Enough has been said to convince the discerning reader, that here was the same credulity on the one side, and the same imposture on the other, as had formerly procured credit to the oracles of Greece and Asia. There is no essential difference between those of the two countries, though so far distant from each other. If the luxury of the southern nations set theirs off with more pomp and magnificence than comported with the simplicity of the rude inhabitants of the North, the latter had no less veneration and attachment to their own oracles, than they. It has been thought to be

* Holmveria saga apud Bartholin. lib. iij. c. 11.

be no lefs for the intereft of religion to attribute thefe of the North to the artifices of the devil, than the others, as well as the pretended fcience of magic, of which the North has paft fo long for the moft celebrated fchool and peculiar country. It is true that men have not advanced on the fubject of the northern oracles, as they have done with refpect to thofe of the fouth, that they ceafed at the birth of Chrift *, although the affertion is as true of the one as of the other: But for want of this proof, an ill-grounded zeal hath found plenty of others; as if the advantages refulting from true religion were lefs important, or our gratitude lefs due, becaufe the evils from which it hath delivered mankind, did not proceed from fupernatural caufes.

Oracles were not the only efforts made by the curiofity of the Scandinavians to penetrate into futurity, nor the only relief impofture afforded them. They had diviners both male and female, honoured with the name of prophets, and revered as if they had been fuch. Some of them were faid to have familiar fpirits, who never left them, and whom they confulted under the form of little idols: Others dragged the ghofts of the departed from their tombs, and forced the

* Pope Gregory writing to the Saxons newly converted, fays, *Falfidica numina in quibus dæmones habitare nofcuntur---Oro ut fint a diabolicâ fraude liberati, &c. &c.* Ex Epift. Bonifac. a Serar. Mogunt. in 4 edit.—Nothing was more common at that time than this fort of language.

the dead to tell them what would happen. Of this last sort was Odin himself, who often called up the souls of the deceased, to know what passed in distant countries. There is still extant a very ancient Icelandic ode upon a subject of this kind * ; wherein the poet represents, in very strong imagery, Odin as descending to the infernal regions, and calling up from thence a celebrated prophetess. Poetry was often employed for the like absurd purposes, and those same SCALDS or bards, who as we shall see hereafter, enjoyed such credit among the living, boasted a power of disturbing the repose of the dead, and of dragging them spite of their teeth out of their gloomy abodes, by force of certain songs which they knew how to compose. The same ignorance, which made poetry be regarded as something supernatural, persuaded them also that the letters or RUNIC characters, which were then used by the few who were able to write and read, included in them certain mysterious and magical properties. Impostors then easily persuaded credulous people, that these letters, disposed and combined after a certain manner, were able to work wonders, and in particular to presage future events. It is said, that Odin, who was the inventor of those characters, knew by their means how to raise the dead. There were letters, or RUNES, to procure victory, to preserve from poison, to relieve women in labour, to cure bodily diseases, to dispel evil thoughts from the mind,

* This the reader will find translated in the second part of this work.

mind, to diffipate melancholy, and to foften the feve-rity of a cruel miftrefs. They employed pretty nearly the fame characters for all thefe different purpofes, but they varied the order and combination of the letters: They wrote them either from right to left, or from top to bottom, or in form of a circle, or contrary to the courfe of the fun, &c. In this principally confifted that puerile and ridiculous art, as little underftood probably by thofe who profeffed it, as it was diftrufted by thofe who had recourfe to it.

I have already remarked, that they had often no other end in facrificing human victims, than to know what was to happen by infpection of their entrails, by the effufion of their blood, and by the greater or lefs degree of celerity with which they funk to the bottom of the water. The fame motive engaged them to lend an attentive ear to the finging of birds, which fome diviners boafted a power of interpreting. The ancient hiftory of Scandinavia is as full of thefe fuperftitious practices, as that of Rome itfelf. We fee in Saxo Grammaticus, as in Livy, auguries which forebode the fuccefs of an expedition, warriors who are ftruck by unexpected prefages, lots confulted, days regarded as favourable or unlucky, female diviners who follow the armies, fhowers of blood, forebodings, wonderful dreams which the event never fails to juftify, and the flighteft circumftances of the moft important actions taken for good or bad omens. This hath been, we well know, a general and inveterate difeafe in human nature, of which it hath only begun

to

to be cured in Europe. To recall to view a ſpectacle, which tends ſo much to mortify and humble us, would be a labour as uſeleſs as diſcouraging to an hiſtorian, if the knowledge of all theſe practices did not make an eſſential part of that of Manners, and of the cauſes of events, without which there could be no hiſtory; and alſo if the ſketch of the errors and miſtakes of human reaſon did not convincingly prove to us the neceſſity of cultivating it. A perſon endued with natural good ſenſe, will alſo find by this means remedies proper to cure whatever remains of ſuch weakneſs and credulity hang about him. It is true, one cannot always refute the marvellous and ſupernatural ſtories of ancient hiſtorians, by the bare circumſtances of their relations; becauſe, beſides that it would be endleſs to enter continually upon ſuch diſcuſſions, we often want the pieces neceſſary to enable us to make all the reſearches ſuch an examination would require. But what needs there more to convince us that we have a right to reject, without exception, all facts of this kind, than to conſider, on the one hand, how ignorant the vulgar are even in our days, how credulous, how eaſy to be impoſed on, and to be even the dupes of their own fancy, greedy of the marvellous, inclined to exaggeration, and precipitant in their judgments: And, on the other hand, that among thoſe nations whoſe hiſtory appears ſo aſtoniſhing at preſent, for a long time all were vulgar, except perhaps a few obſcure ſages, whoſe voice was too feeble to be heard amid the clamours of ſo many blind and prejudiced perſons?

persons? Is it not sufficient to consider further, that the age of the greatest ignorance of such nations is precisely that which hath been most fruitful of oracles, divinations, prophetic dreams, apparitions, and other prodigies of that kind? that they appear more seldom in proportion as they are less believed? and finally, that the experience of our own times shows us, that wherever reason is brought to the greatest perfection, all things fall into the order of natural and simple events, insomuch that the lowest and meanest class of men accustom themselves to believe nothing which is not agreeable to good sense, and accompanied with some probability?

But I repeat it once more, that superstition did not blind all the ancient Scandinavians without exception: And history testifies, that there were, after all, among them men wise enough to discover the folly of the received opinions, and courageous enough to condemn them without reserve. In the history of Olave* king of Norway, a warrior fears not to say publicly, that he relies much more on his own strength, and on his arms, than upon Thor or Odin. Another, in the same book, speaks thus to his friend. "I would have "thee know, that I believe neither in idols nor spi-"rits. I have travelled in many places; I have met "with giants and monstrous men: they could never "overcome me; thus to this present hour my own "force

* Or Olaus surnamed Tryggueson. Vid. Bartholin. de Causis, &c. p. 80.

"force and courage are the ſole objects of my be-"lief." Unluckily there ſeems too much room to ſuſpect that this contempt of ſuperſtition did but throw them for the moſt part into the oppoſite extreme. So true is it, that we ſeldom are able to obſerve a juſt medium. At leaſt, many of the northern warriors ſeem to have been ſo intoxicated with their courage, as to eſteem themſelves independent beings, who had nothing to aſk or fear from the gods. In an Icelandic chronicle, a vain-glorious perſon makes his boaſt to a Chriſtian miſſionary, that he had never yet acknowledged any religion, and that his own ſtrength and abilities were every thing to him. For the ſame reaſon, others refuſed to ſacrifice to the gods of whom they had no need. St. Olave king of Norway, demanding of a warrior, who offered him his ſervices, what religion he profeſſed; the warrior anſwered, "I am neither Chriſtian nor Pagan; my companions "and I have no other religion, than the confidence in "our own ſtrength, and in the good ſucceſs which "always attends us in war; and we are of opinion, "it is all that is neceſſary." The ſame thing is re-lated of Rolf ſurnamed Krack, king of Denmark; one day when one of his companions propoſed to offer a ſacrifice to Odin, he ſaid that he feared nothing from that bluſtering ſpirit, and that he ſhould never ſtand in awe of him. But as it was not always kings who durſt manifeſt ſentiments ſo bold and hardy, the followers of the prevailing religion ſometimes puniſhed theſe irreligious perſons. In the life of king Olave

 Tryggeſon,

Tryggeſon, mention is made of a man who was condemned to exile for having ſung in a public place, verſes, the ſenſe of which was to this purpoſe. "I "will not inſult or affront the gods: Nevertheleſs, "the goddeſs Freya inſpires me with no reſpect: It "muſt certainly be that either ſhe or Odin are chi-"merical deities." It is eaſy to conceive how much, natural good ſenſe, ſupported by that confidence which bodily ſtrength inſpires, could excite in thoſe ancient warriors contempt for their mute and feeble deities, and for the childiſh or troubleſome rites in their worſhip. But beſides this, it is certain, as I have already obſerved, that the Scythian religion, in its original purity, admitted only a ſimple and reaſonable worſhip, and one ſole, principal Deity, who was inviſible and almighty. One may then ſuppoſe, with a good deal of likelihood, that this religion was not by length of time ſo much defaced, but that ſome traces of it ſtill remained in the memory of ſenſible perſons, and in the ſoundeſt part of the nation. Indeed we ſee appear at invervals, in the ancient Scandinavia, ſome men of this ſtamp endued with a real ſtrength of mind, who not only trampled under foot all the objects of the credulity and idle ſuperſtition of the multitude, (an effort which pride renders eaſy, and ſometimes alone produces) but who even raiſed their minds to the inviſible maſter of every thing we ſee; "the "father of the ſun, and of all nature." In an Icelandic chronicle, a perſon named GIEST ſays to his nephew, who is juſt ready to embark for Greenland:

land *: "I beseech, and conjure him who made the "sun, to give success to thy undertaking." A celebrated Norwegian warrior, named THORSTEIN, says, speaking of his father, "He will receive upon this "account a recompence from him, who made the "heaven and the universe, whoever he be:" And, upon another occasion, he makes a vow to the same being, "who made the sun," for, adds he, "his power must needs have been excessive to produce such "a work." All his family entertained the same sentiments, and it is expresly noted in many places of the same chronicle, that it was their religion to believe in him "who was creator of the sun." TORCHILL, a supreme judge of Iceland, a man of unblemished life, and distinguished among the wisest magistrates of that island during the time that it was governed in form of a republic, seeing his end draw near, ordered himself to be set in the open air, with his face turned towards the sun, and having rested there some moments in a kind of extacy, expired, recommending his soul to HIM among the gods, who had created the sun and the stars †. But of all the strokes of this kind, none is more remarkable than what a modern Icelandic historian relates in his manuscript supplement to the history of Norway. Harold Harfagre, the first king of all Norway, says this author, being yet but young, held the following discourse

* Vandæla. apud Barthol. c. 6. lib. i. p. 83.

† Arn. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. c. 6.

course in a popular aſſembly: "I ſwear and proteſt "in the moſt ſacred manner, that I will never offer "ſacrifice to any of the gods adored by the people, "but to him only who hath formed this world, and "every thing we behold in it." Harold lived in the middle of the ninth century, at a time when the Chriſtian religion had not yet penetrated into Norway.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.

)f the form of government which formerly prevailed in the North.

THE character of the ancient northern nations is, in some measure, laid open in the former book. t is the nature of every religion which is the handy-vork of men, always to carry marks of the weakness f its authors, and to breathe forth the same spirit, ith which they themselves were animated. Their overnment and laws are another faithful mirrour, herein that spirit may be seen with no less advan-age. It is obvious, that the laws cannot long be con-rary to the genius of a nation. Sooner or later they vill be impressed with its character, or they will give t theirs. These are two streams very different in their

their ſources, but which as ſoon as they unite in the ſame channel, have but one force and one direction, The importance of this ſubject makes it incumbent on me to treat it with ſome extent, and to bring together with the utmoſt care all the feeble and ſcattered rays, which throw any light upon it amid the obſcurity of ſo many dark ages.

In the firſt place, let us conſult Tacitus, that excellent hiſtorian of ancient Germany, who in his little compendious narrative, hath given in a few pages a moſt ſtriking picture of the inhabitants of this vaſt country. It is needleſs to repeat here what is known to all who have read his treatiſe concerning Germany, that he comprehended under this name all Scandinavia; and whatever he ſays of the former, equally regards the latter. His words ought to be given here entire, and weighed with care. Among this people, he ſays, "the chiefs, or princes *, determine "ſome affairs of leſs importance; all the reſt are re-"ſerved for the general aſſembly: Yet even theſe the "deciſion of which is veſted in the people, are be-"forehand diſcuſſed by the chiefs. . . . . "At theſe aſſemblies they take their ſeats all of them "armed. Silence is commanded by the prieſts, whoſe "buſineſs it is at ſuch times to maintain order. Then "the king or chief ſpeaks firſt; afterwards the great "men are heard in their turns with that attention "which

* *De minoribus rebus* PRINCIPES *conſultant*; *de majoribus* OMNES. Tacit. Germ. c. 11, 12, 13, 14, &c.

" which is due to their age, to their nobility, their
" reputation in war, their eloquence; greater defer-
" ence being paid to their power of perſuaſion, than
" to their perſonal authority. If their advice diſ-
" pleaſes, the people reject it with a general mur-
" mur: If it is approved of, they claſh their lances*.
" It is the moſt honourable way of expreſſing their
" aſſent, or of conferring praiſe, to do it by their
" arms. . . . Criminal cauſes may alſo be brought
" before this great council of the nation. . . . .
" In the ſame aſſemblies are elected the chiefs or
" princes, whoſe buſineſs it is to diſtribute juſtice
" through the towns and villages. To each of theſe
" are joined a hundred aſſeſſors choſen out of the
" people, who aſſiſt the chief with their advice and
" authority. . . . . The kings are choſen
" for their noble birth; the leaders or generals for
" their perſonal valour †. The power of the kings is
" not arbitrary, but limited. The leaders are not ſo
" much to give orders as examples: They muſt ſig-
" nalize themſelves by their courage and activity,
" and their authority muſt be founded on eſteem and
" admiration. . . . . Extreme youth does not
" exclude from the rank of prince or chief, thoſe,
" whom their noble birth, or the diſtinguiſhed merit
" of their fathers intitle to this dignity. As they ad-
" vance in age, and acquire eſteem, other young war-

'riors

* *Frameas concutiunt.* Tacit.

† REGES *ex nobilitate;* DUCES *ex virtute ſumunt.* Tacit. c. 7.

" riors attach themſelves to them and ſwell their re-
" tinue. Nor does any one bluſh to be ſeen among
" theſe ATTENDANTS or FOLLOWERS *. Yet they
" have different degrees of rank, which are regulated
" by the chief's own judgment. Among the follow-
" ers is great emulation, who ſhall ſtand higheſt in
" the chief's or prince's favour: Among the princes,
" who ſhall have the moſt numerous and valiant at-
" tendants. This is their dignity, their ſtrength, to
" be always ſurrounded with a body of choſen
" youths: This is their glory in peace; their ſecuri-
" ty in war. And not only in their own nation, but
" among neighbouring ſtates, they acquire a name
" and reputation, in proportion to the number and
" valour of their attendants. Then is their friend-
" ſhip ſought after by embaſſies, and cultivated by
" preſents. . . . . . In battle, it would be a diſ-
" grace to the chief to be excelled in courage by any
" of his followers: A diſgrace to his followers not
" to equal their chief. Should he periſh, they would
" be expoſed to the higheſt infamy through life if
" they ſhould ſurvive him, and eſcape from battle.
" . . . . . The chiefs fight for victory: They for
" their chief. . . . . . To retain their followers
" in their ſervice, no prince or chief hath any other
" reſource but war. They require of him one while
" a horſe trained for war: One while a victorious
" and bloody lance. His table rudely ſerved, but
" with

* *Nec rubòr inter* COMITES *aſpici.* TAC.

" with great abundance, ſerves them inſtead of " pay."

All the moſt diſtinguiſhed circumſtances which characterize the ancient Gothic form of government, are contained in this remarkable paſſage. Here we ſee Kings, who owe their advancement to an illuſtrious extraction, preſiding, rather than ruling, over a free people. Here we ſee the Nation aſſembling at certain ſtated times, and making reſolutions in their own perſons on all affairs of importance, as to enact laws, to chuſe peace or war, to conclude alliances, to diſtribute juſtice in the laſt reſort, and to elect magiſtrates. Here alſo we diſtinguiſh a body of the Grandees or Chiefs of the nation, who prepare and propoſe the important matters, the deciſion of which is reſerved for the general aſſembly of all the free men: That is, we trace here the firſt lineaments, if I may ſo ſay, of what was afterwards named in different countries, " The council of the nation," " The ſenate," " The " houſe of peers," &c. Here we diſcover the origin of that ſingular cuſtom, of having an elective General under an hereditary King; a cuſtom received among moſt of the nations of German extraction, who had either Mayors of the Palace, or Grand Marſhals, or Conſtables, or Counts: For all theſe different names only expreſſed the ſame thing in different countries. Laſtly, if we examine with attention the words of Tacitus, we cannot doubt but Vaſſalage and the Feudal Tenure had already taken footing among this people before ever they left their native foreſts. For, al-

 though

though perhaps they did not in thoſe early times give lands in fee, and although their Fees or Fiefs were then perhaps nothing but arms, war-horſes, and banquets; what we read of the reciprocal engagements between the Princes or Chiefs and their Followers, evidently contains whatever was eſſential to the nature of Vaſſalage, and all the changes which were afterwards made in it were only ſlight and accidental, occaſioned by the conqueſts and new eſtabliſhments, which followed from it.

If we conſider after this, the character of theſe nations, as it is ſketched out by Tacitus, we ſhall not be ſurprized to ſee them wedded to inſtitutions which they found ſo ſuitable to their ſituation and temper: For being the moſt free and warlike people upon earth, they muſt have had a natural averſion to the authority of a ſingle perſon; and if they placed themſelves under leaders, it was only becauſe war cannot be conducted in any other form. As free men, they would only obey from choice, and be leſs influenced by perſonal authority than by reaſon: As warriors, they conceived no other duty to be owing to a prince, than to be ready to ſhed their blood for his cauſe.

But how came theſe men to preſerve themſelves in ſo great a degree of liberty? This was owing to their climate and manner of life, which gave them ſuch ſtrength of body and mind as rendered them capable of long and painful labours, of great and daring exploits. "Accordingly we have ſince found liberty to

"prevail

"prevail in North America: But not in the South *." For the bodily ſtrength of the northern warriors kept up in them that courage, that opinion of their own valour, that impatience of affronts and injuries, which makes men hate all arbitrary government, and deſpiſe thoſe who ſubmit to it. Being leſs ſenſible of pain than the more ſouthern nations, leſs eaſily moved by the bait of pleaſure, leſs ſuſceptible of thoſe paſſions which ſhake the ſoul too violently, and weaken it by making it dependent on another's will, they were the leſs a prey to ambition, which flatters and intimidates by turns, in order to gain the aſcendant: Their imagination more conſtant than lively, their conception more ſteady than quick, naturally reſiſting novelties, kept them from falling into thoſe ſnares, out of which they would not have known how to eſcape.

They were free, becauſe they inhabited an uncultivated country, rude foreſts and mountains; and liberty is the ſole treaſure of an indigent people: for a poor country excites no avidity, and he who poſſeſſes little, defends it eaſily. They were free, becauſe they were ignorant of thoſe pleaſures, often ſo dearly bought, which render the protection of a powerful maſter neceſſary. They were free, becauſe hunters and ſhepherds, who wander about in woods through inclination or neceſſity, are not ſo eaſily oppreſſed as the timorous inhabitants of incloſed towns, who are there chained down to the fate of their houſes: and

becauſe

* Monteſquieu. L'Eſprit des Loix. Tom. 2.

becauſe a wandering people, if deprived of their liberty in one place, eaſily find it in another, as well as their ſubſiſtence. Laſtly, they were free, becauſe knowing not the uſe of money, there could not be employed againſt them that inſtrument of ſlavery and corruption, which enables the ambitious to collect and diſtribute at will the ſigns of riches.

Further, that ſpirit of liberty, ariſing from their climate, and from their ruſtic and military life, had received new ſtrength from the opinions it had produced; as a ſucker which ſhoots forth from the root of a tree, ſtrengthens by embracing it. In effect, theſe people, eſteeming beyond all things, the right of revenging an affront, the glory of deſpiſing death and periſhing ſword in hand, were always ready to attack tyranny in the firſt who dared to attempt it, and in whatever formidable ſhape it appeared.

By theſe means was liberty preſerved among the inhabitants of Germany and the North, as it were in the bud, ready to bloſſom and expand through all Europe, there to flouriſh in their ſeveral colonies. This powerful principle exerted the more ſtrength in proportion as it was the more preſſed, and the whole power of Rome having been unable to deſtroy it, it made that yield in its turn from the time it began to be enfeebled, till it was entirely overturned. Indeed, there was ſcarce a moment wherein theſe two oppoſite powers preſerved an even balance. As ſoon as ever that of Rome ceaſed to be ſuperior, it was deſtroyed. Its celebrated name, that name which had

been

been ſo long its ſupport, was only a ſignal of vengeance, which ſerved as it were to rally and aſſemble at the ſame inſtant all the northern nations: And immediately all theſe people breaking forth as it were by agreement, overturned this unhappy empire, and formed out of its ruins limited monarchies; ſtates not leſs known before by name, than by their form of government.

In effect, we every where ſee in thoſe ſwarms of Germans and Scandinavians, troops of ſavage warriors who ſeem only born for ravage and deſtruction, changed into a ſenſible and free people as ſoon as ever they had confirmed their conqueſts; impregnating (if I may ſo ſay) their inſtitutions with a ſpirit of order and equality; electing for their kings ſuch of their princes of the blood royal as they judged moſt worthy to wear the crown; dividing between thoſe kings and the whole nation the exerciſe of the ſovereign power; reſerving to the general aſſemblies the right of making laws, and deciding important matters; and laſtly, to give a ſolid ſupport to the powers immediately eſſential to monarchy, diſtributing fiefs to the principal warriors, and aſſigning certain privileges proper to the ſeveral orders of the ſtate.

Such for a long time was the conſtitution of all the governments which theſe people founded in Italy, in Spain, in Gaul, in Britain at that memorable æra, which changed the fate and place of abode of ſo many nations: An æra for ever memorable, ſince here we trace the firſt link (as it were) of a new chain of events;

events; and hence we see spring forth the laws, the manners and principles which have ever since governed so many celebrated nations, whose superiority of genius seems to have called them forth to determine one day the fate of almost all the rest of the world

One cannot without difficulty quit an object so pleasing It is time, however, to confine myself to what more particularly relates to my subject. All that we learn from the historical monuments of the North perfectly confirms the testimony of Tacitus, and either gives or receives new light from the annals of the other Teutonic nations. This remarkable agreement made M. de Montesquieu say that "in reading Tacitus we every where see the codes of the barbarous nations: And in reading the codes of the barbarous nations, we are continually reminded of Tacitus." Notwithstanding this, we must not flatter ourselves that we can discover exactly the extent of power, which the ancient kings of Scandinavia enjoyed, nor the particular rights and privileges of each order of the state. If these were never very precisely determined among a rude people, who had no other laws but custom, how can we distinguish them exactly at the present great distance of time? All that we can obscurely discover, is, that the Danes, who before the arrival of Odin, were divided into many nations, and lived in great independence, were by force of arms subjected to kings more absolute, whom this conqueror placed over them. It is still more probable, that the same thing happened to the Swedes, who,

who, according to Tacitus, were in his time under the government of a ſingle perſon. If this hiſtorian is well informed, the point of time in which he has deſcribed the Swedes, muſt have been that immediately after their conqueſt. This event alone will account for that ſtate of deſpotiſm in which he ſuppoſes them to be ſunk. "The Swedes *," he tells us, "honour riches as well as the Romans. And for "this reaſon they have fallen under the dominion of "a ſingle perſon. Their monarchy is no longer moderated and limited by any reſtrictions; but is entirely deſpotic. The arms are not there as among "the other Germanic people, promiſcuouſly found "in every one's hand, but they are kept ſhut up under a cloſe guard; and are even under the cuſtody "of a ſlave." This government ſo "entirely deſpotic" was doubtleſs owing to ſome accident: accordingly it could not be of long duration. An arbitrary government hath ſince been re-eſtabliſhed in Sweden upon ſeveral occaſions, but never for any long continuance. This climate, made for liberty, always triumphs in the end over deſpotic ſway, which in other countries hath always triumphed over liberty.

The Danes were not long before they recovered their right of electing their kings, and conſequently all the other rights leſs eſſential to liberty. It is true, the people ſeem always to have made it a law to chuſe the

* Lat. *Suiones.* Tacit. Germ. c. 44.

the neareſt relation of the deceaſed king, or at leaſt ſome one of the royal family, which they reſpected as iſſued from the gods. They ſtill ſhew the places where theſe elections were made: And as Denmark was for a long time divided into three kingdoms, we find accordingly three principal monuments of this cuſtom; the one near Lunden in Scania, the other at Leyra, or Lethra, in Zealand, and the third near Viburg in Jutland. Theſe monuments, whoſe rude bulk has preſerved them from the ravages of time, are only vaſt unhewn ſtones, commonly twelve in number, ſet upright and placed in form of a circle. In the middle is erected a ſtone much larger than the reſt, on which they made a ſeat for their king *. The other ſtones ſerved as a barrier to keep off the populace, and marked the place of thoſe whom the people had appointed to make the election. They treated alſo in the ſame place of the moſt important affairs. But if the king chanced to die in war, or at a diſtance from home, they formed upon the ſpot a place after the ſame model, by bringing together the largeſt ſtones they could find. The principal chiefs got upon theſe ſtones, and with a loud voice delivered their opinions; then the ſoldiers who ſtood in crowds about them ſignified their approbation or aſſent by claſhing their ſhields together in a kind of cadence, or by raiſing certain ſhouts. We know that this cuſtom of electing their kings in the open field prevailed among all

* Worm. Monum. Danic.

all the northern nations, and was for a long time necessary, because they had no cities. The emperors of Germany were for many ages elected after the same manner; and the Poles, more attached to their ancient customs than other nations, have not to this day forsaken it.

In Sweden, they joined to the other ceremonies which I have been describing, an oath, reciprocally taken between the king and his subjects *. One of the senators, or judges of the provinces, convoked an assembly to make a new election immediately after the death of the king, and demanded with a loud voice of the people, if they would accept for king the person he named, who was always one of the royal family. When they had all given their consent, the new king was lifted up on the shoulders of the senators †, in order that all the people might see and know him. Then he took Odin to witness, that he would observe the laws, defend his country, extend its boundaries, revenge whatever injuries his predecessors had received from their enemies, and would strike some signal stroke which should render him and his people famous. This oath he renewed at the funeral of his predecessor, which was usually celebrated with great

 pomp:

* Dalin. Suea Rikes. Hist. tom. 1. chap. 7.

† We preserve in England to this day a relique of this custom, by carrying our members of parliament, as soon as they are elected, in chairs upon the shoulders of the burgesses, and so exposing them to general view. T.

pomp: And alſo on occaſion of the progreſs which he was obliged to make through the chief provinces of the kingdom, in order to receive the homage of his ſubjects. I relate here all the particulars of this ceremony, becauſe the exact conformity which we find between the manners of the Danes and Swedes during the ages of paganiſm, will not ſuffer us to doubt but that the kings of Denmark were elected after the ſame manner. This ſuppoſition is confirmed by what we can diſcover of the ancient conſtitution of the kingdom of Norway. But it is ſufficient juſt to mention here this identity of government in the three principal kingdoms of the North. To deſcribe it minutely in them all, would occaſion tireſome repetitions. We have a remarkable fact, relative to this matter, which it will be of much greater conſequence to know, as well on account of the great light which it throws on this ſubject, as on account of its own ſtriking ſingularity.

A colony of Norwegians driven from their own country by the tyranny of one of their kings, eſtabliſhed itſelf in Iceland towards the end of the ninth century *. Hiſtory informs us, that immediately, without loſing time, they proceeded to elect magiſtrates, to enact laws, and, in a word, to give their government ſuch a regular form, as might at once inſure their tranquillity and independence. The ſituation in which theſe Icelanders found themſelves is

remarkable

* See a more particular relation of this below, in Chap. XI.

remarkable on many accounts. The genius of this people, their natural good ſenſe, and their love of liberty appeared upon this occaſion in all their vigour. Uninterrupted and unreſtrained by any outward force, we have here a nation delivered up to its own direction, and eſtabliſhing itſelf in a country ſeparated by vaſt ſeas from all the reſt of the world: We ſee, therefore, in all their inſtitutions, nothing but the pure dictates of their own inclinations and ſentiments, and theſe were ſo natural, and ſo ſuited to their ſituation and character, that we do not find any general deliberation, any irreſolution, any trial of different modes of government ever preceded that form of civil polity which they at firſt adopted, and under which they lived afterwards ſo many ages. The whole ſettled into form as it were of itſelf, and fell into order without any effort. In like manner, as bees form their hives, the new Icelanders, guided by a happy inſtinct, immediately on their landing in a deſert iſland, eſtabliſhed that fine conſtitution wherein liberty is fixed on its proper baſis, viz. a wiſe diſtribution of the different powers of government. An admirable diſcovery, which at firſt ſight, one would think muſt have been the maſter-piece of ſome conſummate politician; and which, nevertheleſs, according to the remark of a great genius of this age *, was compleated

* M. de MONTESQUIEU.—— The following account is built on the teſtimony of many ancient annals, both printed and manuſcript, of

ed here, as in other countries, by ſavages in the midſt of foreſts.

Nature having of itſelf divided the iſland into four provinces, the Icelanders followed this diviſion, and eſtabliſhed in each of them a magiſtrate who might be called the Provincial Judge. Each province was ſubdivided into three Prefectures *, which had their reſpective Judges or Prefects. And laſtly, each Prefecture contained a certain number of Bailiwicks; in each of which were commonly five inferior magiſtrates, whoſe buſineſs it was to diſtribute juſtice in the firſt inſtance through their own diſtrict; to ſee that good order was preſerved in it †; and to convoke the aſſemblies of the Bailywick, as well ordinary as extraordinary, of which all free men, who poſſeſſed lands of a certain value, were members. In theſe aſſemblies they elected the five Judges or Bailifs, who were to be perſons diſtinguiſhed for their wiſdom;

of the Icelanders themſelves: Of which we find various notices and extracts in a multitude of books, particularly in that of Torfæus cited above, and in Arngrim's work intitled Crymogæa.

* Only the northern province or quarter, being larger than the reſt, contained four of theſe Prefectures.

† It was the buſineſs of theſe magiſtrates to puniſh the diſſolute, particularly ſuch as were poor through their own fault. We find in the Icelandic code this remarkable law which Arngrim thus renders into Latin. *Ejuſmodi mendici impune* CASTRANDI *etiamſi cum eorundum nece conjunctum foret.* Tit. de Pupil. c. 33. There is in the ſame code another Law which forbids the giving ſuſtenance or relief of any kind to common beggars. Tit. de Mendic. c. 39 & 36. *Firſt Edit.*

dom; and were required to enjoy a certain income in lands, for fear their poverty ſhould expoſe them to contempt or corruption. When the cauſes were of any importance, the whole aſſembly gave their opinion. Without its full conſent, a new member could not be received into their community. If any ſuch offered himſelf, he applied to the aſſembly, who examined his motives for making the requeſt, and rejected it, if the petitioner had failed in honour on any occaſion, or was merely too poor: For, as the community maintained ſuch of its own members as were by any accident reduced to miſery or want *, it was their common intereſt to exclude ſuch perſons as were indigent: They had for that purpoſe a fund ſupported by contribution, as alſo by what aroſe from the fines, which were the more conſiderable, as they uſed in thoſe times ſcarce any other kind of puniſhment †.

Laſtly,

* Thus the Aſſembly rebuilt (at leaſt in part) any man's houſe that was burnt down, beſtowed a new ſtock of cattle on ſuch as had loſt their own by any contagious diſtemper, &c. In theſe caſes the Bailiffs taxed each citizen according to his ſubſtance. *Firſt Edit.*

† It is a remark of the author of the SPIRIT OF LAWS, a remark confirmed by the Hiſtory of all nations, that in proportion as any people love liberty, the milder are their puniſhments. The ancient Germans and Scandinavians, the moſt brave and free race of men that perhaps ever exiſted, knew ſcarcely any other than pecuniary penalties. They carried this ſpirit with them through all parts of Europe, as appears from the Codes of the Viſigoths, the Burgundians, &c. But the governments which they eſtabliſhed in the more ſouthern countries could not ſubſiſt with ſo much lenity.

In

Laſtly, this ſame aſſembly of the Bailiwick took care to examine into the conduct of the Bailiffs. received the complaints that were made againſt them, and puniſhed them when convicted of abuſing their authority.

A re-aſſembly of the members, or at leaſt of the deputies of ten ſuch communities, repreſented, what I call a Prefecture. Each quarter or grand province of the iſland contained three of theſe, as we have already ſeen. The Chief of a Prefecture enjoyed conſiderable dignity. He had a power to aſſemble the ten communities within his diſtrict, and preſided himſelf over all aſſemblies of this ſort, as well ordinary as extraordinary; he was at the ſame time head of the religion within his Prefecture. It was he who appointed the ſacrifices, and other religious ceremonies. which were celebrated in the ſame place where they regulated their political and civil affairs. There lay an appeal to theſe Aſſemblies from the ſentence pronounced by the magiſtrates of the Bailiwicks, and here were determined

In Iceland and Norway, all crimes were rated at a certain number of Marks. The Mark was divided into eight parts, each of which was equivalent to ſix ells of ſuch ſtuff, as made their ordinary cloaths. Conſequently a Mark was in value equal to 48 ells of this cloath. Now a Mark conſiſted of ſomewhat more than an ounce of fine ſilver. A cow commonly coſt two Marks and a half. Hence we may judge of the quantity of ſilver that was then in thoſe countries. But this remark muſt not be extended to Denmark, which was apparently richer. See Arngrim. Jon. Crymog. lib. 1. p. 86. *Firſt Edit.*

termined whatever difputes arofe between thofe inferior communities. Here alfo the prefect received the tax, which each citizen was obliged to pay towards the expences of the religious worfhip; and here he judged, in the quality of pontiff, fuch as were accufed of profaning temples, of fpeaking irreverently of the gods, or of any other act of impiety. The penalties inflicted on criminals of this fort confifted for the moft part of fines, which the affemblies empowered the prefect to levy, in order to lay them out in repair of the temples. But when any affair occurred of great importance, or which concerned the whole province, then the members, or perhaps only the deputies of the three Prefectures met together and compofed, what they called the States of the Quarter, or Province. Thefe States did not affemble regularly like the others, who were required to meet at leaft once a year; nor do we know exactly what were the objects of their deliberations. All that one can conjecture is, that they had recourfe to it, as to an extraordinary means of terminating fuch quarrels as arofe between the communities of the different Prefectures, or to obviate fome danger which threatened the whole province in general.

Superior to all thefe Affemblies of the leffer Communities and Provinces, were the STATES GENERAL of the whole ifland (*Alting*), which anfwered to the *Als-heriar-ting* of the other Scandinavian nations, to the *Wittena-Gemot*, or Parliament of the Anglo-Saxons,

ons *, to the *Champs de Mars*, or *de May* of the French, and to the *Cortes* of the Spaniards, &c. These assembled every year, and each citizen of Iceland thought it his honour and his duty to be present at them. The president of this great assembly was Sovereign Judge of the island. He possessed this office for life, but it was conferred upon him by the States. His principal business was to convoke the General Assembly, and to see the observance of the laws; hence the name of *Lagman*, or Man of the Laws, was given to this magistrate. He had a power of examining before the General Estates, and of reversing all the sentences pronounced by inferior judges throughout the island, of annulling their ordinances, and even of punishing them, if the complaints brought against them were well-founded. He could propose the enacting of new laws, the repealing or changing of the old ones: and if they passed in the General Assembly, it was his business to put them in execution. After this people began to have written laws, and the whole island had adopted one common form of jurisprudence, it was the Supreme Judge who had the keeping of the original authentic copy, to which all the others were to be conformable. To his judgment, and that of the assembly, lay an appeal from the

* *Al-ting* is compounded of *All*, all, and *Ting*, a court of justice, assize: *Als-heriar-ting* signifies, " The Court of all the Lords." *Wittena-Gemot*, " The Meeting of " the Wise-men." It is evident, that all these expressions convey the same idea.

the ſentences given in the inferior courts. The Bailiffs or Prefects, whoſe ſentence he reviſed, were obliged to judge the cauſe over again in his preſence, and he afterwards pronounced ſentence both on the contending parties, and on the judges. The fear of being condemned and puniſhed before ſo numerous an aſſembly, was (as Arngrim well remarks) a great check upon all theſe ſubaltern judges, and ſerved to keep every magiſtrate within the bounds of his duty. Commonly the Seſſion of theſe General Eſtates laſted ſixteen days, and they ſhow at this time the place of their meeting, which began and ended with ſolemn ſacrifices. It was chiefly during that ſeſſion, that the Sovereign Judge exerciſed his authority. Out of this aſſembly his power ſeems not to have been conſiderable: But he was at all times treated with great honour and reſpect; and was always conſidered as the oracle of the laws and protector of the people. The Icelandic chronicles carefully note the year, wherein each Judge was elected, and the time was computed by the years of his election, as among the Lacedemonians by thoſe of the EPHORI. We ſee by the liſt, which Arngrim has preſerved of them, that there were thirty-eight from the beginning of the commonwealth to its diſſolution: And we find in this number the celebrated hiſtorian Snorro Sturleſon, whom I have already introduced to the reader's knowledge.

Such was the conſtitution of a republic, which is at preſent quite forgotten in the North, and utterly unknown through the reſt of Europe even to men of

much reading, notwithſtanding the great number of poets and hiſtorians, which that republic produced. But fame is not the portion of indigent nations, eſpecially when remote, unconnected with the reſt of mankind, and placed under a rigorous climate. It is eaſy to diſcover here the genius of all the 'Gothic *' tribes, and their notions of government. That diſtribution of the people into different communities ſubordinate to one another, that right of being judged every one by the members of his own community †, that care of watching over each citizen committed to the community of which he was a member, thoſe general aſſemblies of the whole nation, with whom alone the legiſlative power was depoſited, &c. All theſe inſtitutions exiſted among the Germans already in the time of Tacitus, and without doubt long before. They prevailed in Denmark and Sweden, and we find numerous traces of them at this day. They were carried into Iceland, and there brought to perfection. They followed the Saxons into England; and when the times of confuſion had cauſed them to wear out of memory, the great Alfred immortalized his name by reviving them. It would be eaſy to ſhew traces of them in the firſt eſtabliſhments of the Francs in Gaul, of the Goths in Spain, and the ſame in ſeveral countries of Germany: But a diſplay of ſo much erudition would be foreign to my plan. I only point out the way to the reader, and ſhall leave him to peruſe

* Celtic. *Orig.*

† Teut. *Gylde*, or *Kelte*, collegium, ſodalitas; whence perhaps *Celtæ*. T.

rufe at his leifure a fubject fo fruitful and fo intereft-ing, whether he is difpofed to read what others have written on it, or to follow the train of his own reflec-tions.

With regard to the laws, which prevailed in Scan-dinavia during the times of paganifm, all that we can fay for certain about them may be reduced within very fmall compafs. Tradition, cuftom, maxims learnt by heart, and above all, fimplicity of manners, ferved this people in the firft ages inftead of laws. They had maxims, which from time immemorial had been in the mouths of their fages, and which were thought to have been delivered to the firft men by the gods themfelves. Such were thofe of which the Icelandic poets have preferved fome fragments, under the title of the "Sublime Difcourfe of Odin," as will be more particularly fhewn in the fequel of this work *. It is doubtful whether the ancient Danes, as well as their neighbours, had written laws, before their con-verfion to Chriftianity. It is true, if we will believe Saxo the Grammarian, a king of Denmark named Frotho, who lived many ages before that period, pub-lifhed laws both civil and military, which were tranf-mitted down to the time of that author. But this great antiquity renders the fact too fufpicious to be admitted upon the fingle authority of fuch an hifto-rian as Saxo. It would be running too great a ha-zard to argue on a fuppofition, built on fuch weak foundations;

* See Vol. II. towards the end.

foundations; and that regard to truth, which ought to prevail over all other motives, obliges me for once to neglect domestic information, and to have recourse to foreign intelligence.

The ancient inhabitants of Germany and Scandinavia emerged but slowly from a state of nature. The ties which linked different families together were for a long time nothing but a confederacy to exercise violence, or to repel it. They possessed a great extent of lands, of which they cultivated but little, and resided on less: In short, they lived too separate from each other, to have any great need of civil laws; and their Chiefs had too little authority to make them observed, if they had. Hence so many little societies and confederacies. Men banded together to revenge an injury: and the sentiment of honour, as well as interest, made them faithful to each other in an association so necessary to their welfare. A man's relations and friends who had not revenged his death, would instantly have lost that reputation which constituted their principal security. The inhabitants of Friezeland lived for a long time in a state of this kind. Most of the other German nations had already advanced a step beyond this in the time of Tacitus. Endless disorders, the unavoidable consequences of the right of self-revenge, had suggested to the wiser sort among them, the necessity of magistrates, who should interpose their authority in private quarrels, and oblige the offended person or his relations to receive a present from the aggressor; that so a compensation being

being made for an injury, might prevent the consequences of an eternal reſentment, which from private perſons might extend to the public. And for fear that this manner of terminating differences ſhould become a new ſource of them, the compenſation * was determined by an invariable rule, and commonly limited to a certain value in cattle, the only money known in thoſe rude ages. A mark of ſubmiſſion of this ſort ſatisfied mens pride as to the point of honour, gratified their avarice, and ſufficiently ſecured them from a repetition of the offence. The Danes, in this reſpect, followed the ſteps of the neighbouring nations. Mere parity of reaſon might give one a right to ſuppoſe this, even if we had not more poſitive proofs; but without accumulating theſe unneceſſarily, we need only caſt our eyes on the ancient laws of the conquerors of Great Britain. It is well known that the Angles and Jutes, who ſhared with the Saxons in the honour of that conqueſt, were Daniſh nations, who came from Jutland and Sleſwick. Now moſt of the laws of that people are ſtill extant, and whoever will run over the collections, publiſhed by Lambard, Wilkins, and Leibnitz, will not doubt but they were all dictated by the ſame ſpirit, and were really the ſame in effect. It will be ſufficient to quote a few particulars, to enable us to judge of their general ſpirit; for this is all I undertake to ſhew of them. As to their more particular minute circumſtances, they have doubtleſs varied a thouſand times, in

* Scott. *kelchyn*, from Teut. *kelten*, compenſare. E.

in different ages, and countries: But these we shall not descend to at present.

The laws of the Saxons, as regulated by Charlemagne, and published by Leibnitz *, established a composition in money for most sorts of crimes; and for want of money this was to be paid in the flesh of cattle, every limb and joint of which had its known value regulated by law. They carefully distinguished the different degrees of offence, as well as those of the rank, which the offended person bore in the state. Accordingly, for the murder of a grandee or a prince the composition was 1440 *sous* †, and the same for every wound that deprived him of his hearing, sight, or use of his limbs. But if this injury was done to a free man, and not to a noble ‡, the composition was only 120 *sous* §; at the same time, the murder of a slave was rated at 30; which was precisely the price of a simple blow, that produced neither swelling nor blackness, if given to a prince or noble. Much the same proportions were observed by the law of the Angles. Wounds given to a maiden were estimated at double the rate they would have been, if given to a man of the same rank of life. It was not the same with a woman who had borne children. Outrages against

* Leibnitz Rer. Brunswic. tom. 1.

† If the Author computes by modern money: It is 720 pence English, or about 3l. sterling. T.

‡ The original is *Roda*, whence comes the word *Roturier*, by which the French express at present, One who is not a gentleman.

§ Sixty pence, or 5s. sterling. T.

against modesty were also valued with a degree of exactness, of which one would not have thought matters of that nature susceptible. "The laws of these "people," says M. de Montesquieu, "judged of insults offered to men by the size of the wounds, nor "did they shew more refinement as to the offences "committed against women: So that they seem to "have measured injuries, as one measures figures in "geometry."

These laws vary more in what relates to theft. By the law of the Saxons, it was in most cases punished with death. By that of the Angles, which doubtless approaches nearer to the laws of the other Danish nations, the robber compounded by paying tripple the value of what he had stolen. But when government had acquired a little more stability, and when the manners were a little more civilized, men were not satisfied with opposing to the disorder a barrier so often ineffectual. The magistrates appointed to watch over the public peace, pretended that THEY were insulted as often as that peace was broken, and therefore over and above the composition which was to atone for the offence, they exacted a fine, either as a satisfaction due to the public, or as a recompence for the trouble given themselves in making up the difference, and in protecting the offender. These fines were for a long time all, or almost all the punishment, which could possibly prevail among a valiant and free people, who esteemed their blood too precious to be shed any other way than in battle. Their kings had for

for many ages no other revenue than what arofe from thefe fines, and from their own private demefnes: All other kinds of impofition were not known till long after that period of time, to which we at prefent confine our refearches.

If this way of punifhing crimes may juftly pafs for fingular, that of eftablifhing proofs in the adminiftration of juftice may be efteemed no lefs fo. Here all the ignorance, all the barbarity of our anceftors manifeft themfelves fo plainly, that it is not in the power of our reflections to add to them. Their embarraffment was fo great when they endeavoured to diftinguifh truth from falfhood, that they were obliged to have recourfe to the moft ftrange expedients and moft ridiculous practices. Thus they fometimes obliged the accufed to produce a certain number of perfons called COMPURGATORS; not that thefe men had, or were fuppofed to have any knowledge of the affair in queftion, but they were fimply to fwear they were perfuaded the accufed fpoke true. Befides this, they often appointed what was called the JUDICIARY COMBAT, and how abfurd foever this cuftom was, it was fo intimately connected with their opinions concerning deftiny and providence, that it triumphed for a long time over Religion, Popes, and Councils; and though a hundred times profcribed, as often revived and appeared again under different fhapes. Laftly, when the difcovery of truth appeared to them to exceed all human powers, they had recourfe to fupernatural means, and what they called DIVINE JUDGMENTS.

MENTS. They had many ways of conſulting that oracle. For as, according to their notions, all the elements were animated by an Intelligence as incorruptible in its juſtice, as the Deity whence it ſprung, they thought they had nothing to do but to unite the accuſed perſon to one of theſe divinities, and ſo oblige it to declare by the manner of its acting upon him, what judgment it entertained of his innocence. Thus ſometimes they caſt him into a deep water, tied about with cords: If he ſunk, that is, if the Genius of the water received him into its boſom, it declared him to be innocent: If it rejected him, if he ſwam upon the ſurface, he was looked upon as convicted of the crime *. This was called the WATERY-ORDEAL.

The

* This kind of proof was more dangerous, than it appears to have been at firſt ſight; for though a man thrown into the water commonly ſinks at firſt to the bottom, yet as they tied him about with large cords, 'and withs,' he ſometimes ſwam on the ſurface ſpite of his teeth. This kind of proof indeed, as well as that of Boiling Water, was only for perſons of inferior rank. Others handled hot iron, or put their hands into a red-hot gauntlet, or walked blind-fold over burning plough-ſhares. If at the end of certain days there remained any marks of the fire on the hands or feet, the accuſed were judged guilty; if not, he was acquitted. There is reaſon to think that, notwithſtanding they took all poſſible precaution, they alſo had recourſe to certain preſervatives againſt the effects of fire, and perhaps the ſame that mountebanks in our times make uſe of, as oft as they amuſe the people with ſpectacles of the ſame kind. Beſides this, men who were accuſtomed to hard labour, to the toils of hunting, and conſtant handling of arms, had rendered their skins ſo thick and callous, that they could not eaſily be hurt; and as for the Ladies, they were generally allowed Champions to undergo the trial for them. *Firſt Edit.*

The proof by fire, or FIERY-ORDEAL ſeems to have been more in uſe afterwards, and founded upon a different train of reaſoning; for in things of this nature, we muſt not expect ſuch rude minds to act very conſiſtently.

* As for the ceremonies which accompanied theſe kinds of proof, the caſes in which they were appointed, and the other minute circumſtances, they varied in different times and places: And as imitation and habit perpetuate cuſtoms long after the cauſes of them have ceaſed, the ORDEAL was practiſed during many ages by men, who doubtleſs believed nothing about the genii preſiding over the ſeveral elements, or the other doctrines of the ancient religion †. I ſhall not enter on the minute hiſtory of the ORDEAL, &c. which was not peculiar to the ancient Danes, and may be found deſcribed in other books ‡. I thought proper only to mark the connection between them and the doctrines of that Religion, which I deſcribed in the preceding chapters: A connection which has been ſeldom

* From hence to the end of the chap. is omitted in the 2d edit. of the original. T.

† Thus, long after Chriſtianity was eſtabliſhed among the Anglo-Saxons, king Edward the Confeſſor (a reputed ſaint) is ſaid to have put his mother to the proof of the Burning Plough-Shares.— And even down to our own times, the WATERY ORDEAL, or Proof by Swimming, has been employed by the vulgar for the trial of Witchcraft, whenever they could find means to put it in practice. T.

‡ Vid. Wormius in Monum. Danic. lib. i. c. 11. and Steph. Stephanius in his Notes on Saxo Grammaticus.

ſeldom attended to, and which ſhews that it is only for want of ſtudying mankind, that they appear to act wholly without motives or principles of conduct. It was king Valdemar the ſecond * to whom the glory belongs of having aboliſhed this abſurd and inhuman practice in Denmark †.

* He reigned from the year 1202, to 1241. T.

† I cannot conclude this ſubject without obſerving that we find ſome traces of the ORDEAL among the ancient Greeks and Romans. Thus in the ANTIGONE of Sophocles, (Act. II. Sc. II.) we have the following remarkable paſſage, which ſhows it was not unknown in Greece,

"The guards accus'd each other; nought was prov'd,
"But each ſuſpected each, and all deny'd,
"Offering in proof of innocence to GRASP
"The BURNING STEEL, to WALK THRO' FIRE, and take
"Their ſolemn oath they knew not of the deed."

See Franklin's Sophocles and note on the above paſſage.—See alſo Stiernhok de Jur. Vet. Suec. lib. i. c. 8. apud Dalin. Sue. Rik. Hiſt. tom. i. ch. 7.

Pliny ſpeaking of a feaſt, which the ancient Romans celebrated every year in honour of the ſun, obſerves that the prieſts, who were to be of the family of the Hirpians, danced on this occaſion bare-foot on burning coals without burning themſelves: This was apparently a relique of the Fiery Ordeal. Plin. Hiſt. Nat. lib. vii. 2.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IX.

The paſſion of the ancient Scandinavians for arms: their valour: the manner in which they made war. A digreſſion concerning the ſtate of population among them.

" ROME had reckoned from its foundation ſix " hundred and forty years, when the arms of " the Cimbri were firſt heard of among us. From " that time to the preſent have elapſed two hundred " and ſix years more. So long have we been in con- " quering Germany. And in the courſe of ſo tedious " a war, what various loſſes have been ſuſtained by " each party? No nation hath given us more fre- " quent alarms; neither the Samnites, the Carthagi- " nians, the Spaniards, the Gauls, nor even the Par-

thians:

" thians; ſo much leſs vigour hath the deſpotic pow-
" er of Arſaces had, than the liberty of the Germans.
" For, except the defeat of Craſſus, what hath the
" conquered and proſtrate Eaſt to object to the cur-
" rent of our ſucceſs? Whereas the Germans have
" taken or defeated five generals of the Republic,
" who commanded ſo many conſular armies. They
" cut off Varus and three legions from Auguſtus
" himſelf. Nor was that advantage obtained with
" impunity, which Marius gained over them in Ita-
" ly, the divine Julius in Gaul, and Druſus, Tiberi-
" us, and Germanicus in their own country. And
" even preſently after this, the tremendous threats of
" Caligula became the object of their ſport. A re-
" ſpite followed, till profiting by our diſcord and ci-
" vil wars, they attacked our legions in their winter
" quarters, and even undertook the conqueſt of Gaul.
" We have ſince driven them back beyond the Rhine:
" but in theſe latter times, our victories over them
" have been leſs real than the pomp of our triumphs.
" If this people cannot be brought to love us, at leaſt
" may they always hate each other! ſince in the pre-
" ſent declining fates of the empire, fortune can grant
" us no greater favour, than the diſſentions of our e-
" nemies *."

Such was the opinion entertained of the German and northern nations, by the people who conquered the reſt of the world. Such, according to the confeſ-

ſion

* Tacit. Germ. c. 37, et c. 33.

ſion of Tacitus, was that martial courage, that ardour, that conſtancy in defending and avenging their liberty, which ſo early threatened the power of Rome, and in a few ages after overturned it. It is not my preſent buſineſs to write the hiſtory of that great revolution, which changed the face of Europe; but my ſubject leads me to diſcloſe its cauſes, ſince they are contained in the opinions and manners which I am deſcribing. We only want here that penetrating eye, that deep ſenſe and energy of ſtyle, which diſtinguiſhed the author I have been tranſlating. The ſources whence iſſued thoſe torrents of people, which from the North overwhelmed all Europe, the principles which put them in motion, and gave them ſo much activity and force, theſe objects, ſo grand and intereſting, have been but ſlightly and weakly treated of. The more enlightened people, who were the victims of theſe ravages, were too much preſſed with the weight of their calamity, to have leiſure to trace its remote cauſes. Like the thunder which remains unſeen in the clouds till the moment it burſts forth, and whoſe nature we have no time to ſtudy while it is ſtriking us; theſe unexpected irruptions would hardly become the objects of reſearch, till after their effects were forgotten. Hence the relations that have been given us of them, are ſo unintereſting, confuſed and obſcure: faults to which every hiſtory will be liable which only gives us a heap of facts, without being able to develope their cauſes. The greateſt part then of the hiſtorical phænomena of the middle ages can

can only be explained by a deep inſight into the manners of the northern nations. It is only from thence we can ever be able to comprehend what could induce whole nations to tranſport themſelves from one extremity of Europe to the other; could break through the ties of country, which ſo ſtrongly attach men to the places of their birth; could render them unanimous in ſuch ſtrange projects, and make them thus ſpread themſelves beyond their own boundaries with ſuch exuberance and impetuoſity.

I have already hinted, that the ancient Scandinavians breathed nothing but war, which was at once with them the ſource of honour, riches and ſafety. Their education, laws, prejudices, morality and religion, all concurred to make that their ruling paſſion and only object. From their moſt tender age they applied themſelves to learn the military art; they hardened their bodies, and accuſtomed themſelves to cold, fatigue and hunger. They exerciſed themſelves in running, in the chace, in ſwimming acroſs the greateſt rivers, and in handling their arms. The very ſports of childhood itſelf, and of early youth were directed all towards this end: dangers were always intermingled with their play. For it conſiſted in taking frightful leaps, in climbing up the ſteepeſt rocks, in fighting naked with offenſive weapons, in wreſtling with the utmoſt fury: it was therefore common to ſee them at the age of fifteen years already grown robuſt men, and able to make themſelves feared in combat. It was alſo at this age that their young men

became

became their own maſters, which they did by receiving a ſword, a buckler, and a lance. This ceremony was performed in ſome public meeting. One of the principal perſons of the aſſembly armed the youth in public. "This, we are told by Tacitus, was his "*Toga Virilis*, his entrance upon dignities. Before "this he made only part of a family, now he became "a member of the ſtate." After this he was obliged to provide for his own ſubſiſtence, and was either now to live by hunting, or by joining in ſome excurſion againſt an enemy. Particular care was taken to prevent theſe young ſoldiers from enjoying too early an acquaintance with the oppoſite ſex, till their limbs had acquired all the vigour of which they were capable. Indeed they could have no hope to be acceptable to the women, but in proportion to the courage and addreſs they had ſhown in war and in their military exerciſes. Accordingly we ſee in an ancient ſong, preſerved by Bartholin *, a king of Norway extremely ſurprized that, as he could perform eight different exerciſes, his miſtreſs ſhould preſume to reject his ſuit. I ſhall frequently have occaſion to produce new inſtances of this manner of thinking among their women: it is ſufficient at preſent to obſerve, that they were not likely to ſoften their children by too much delicacy or indulgence. Theſe tender creatures were generally born in the midſt of camps and armies. Their eyes, from the moment they were firſt opened, ſaw

* See a tranſlation of this in the ſecond volume.

ſaw nothing but military ſpectacles, arms, effuſion of blood, and combats either real or in ſport: thus as they grew up from their infancy, their ſouls were early diſpoſed to imbibe the cruel prejudices of their fathers.

Their laws for the moſt part (like thoſe of the ancient Lacedemonians) ſeemed to know no other virtues than thoſe of a military nature, and no other crimes but cowardice. They inflicted the greateſt penalties on ſuch as fled the firſt in battle. The laws of the ancient Danes, according to Saxo, excluded them from ſociety, and declared them infamous. Among the Germans this was ſometimes carried ſo far as to ſuffocate cowards in mud; after which, they covered them over with hurdles: to ſhew, ſays Tacitus, that though the puniſhment of crimes ſhould be public, there are certain degrees of cowardice and infamy which ought to be buried in eternal ſilence. The moſt flattering diſtinctions were reſerved for ſuch as had performed ſome ſignal exploit; and the laws themſelves diſtributed men into different ranks according to their different degrees of courage. Frotho, king of Denmark, had ordained, according to Saxo, that whoever ſolicited an eminent poſt in the army, ought upon all occaſions to attack one enemy; to face two; to retire only one ſtep back from three; and not to make an actual retreat till aſſaulted by four. Hence was formed that prejudice ſo deeply rooted among theſe people, that there was no other way to acquire glory, but by the profeſſion of arms, and a

fanatic

fanatic valour: a prejudice, the force of which displayed itself without obstruction at a time, when luxury was unknown; when that desire, so natural, and so active among men, of drawing upon themselves the attention of their equals, had but one single object and support; and when their country and their fellow citizens had no other treasure but the fame of their exploits, and the terror thereby excited in their neighbours.

The rules of justice, far from checking these prejudices, had been themselves warped and adapted to their bias. It is no exaggeration to say, that all the 'Gothic and' Celtic nations entertained opinions on this subject, quite opposite to the theory of our times. They looked upon war as a real act of justice, and esteemed force an incontestible title over the weak, a visible mark that God had intended to subject them to the strong. They had no doubt but the intentions of this divinity had been to establish the same dependance among men which there is among animals, and setting out from the principle of the inequality of men, as our modern civilians do from that of their equality, they inferred thence that the weak had no right to what they could not defend. This maxim, which formed the basis of the law of nations among the ancient inhabitants of Europe, being dictated by their most darling passion, we cannot wonder that they should so steadily act up to it in practice. And which, after all, is worst; to act and think as they did, or like the moderns, with better principles to act as ill?

As

As to the ancient nations, we attribute nothing to them here but what is juſtified by a thouſand facts. They adopted the above maxim in all its rigour, and gave the name of Divine Judgment not only to the JUDICIARY COMBAT, but to conflicts and battles of all ſorts: victory being in their opinion the only certain mark by which Providence enables us to diſtinguiſh thoſe, whom it has appointed to command others. "Valour, ſays a German warrior in Tacitus, is the "only proper goods of men. The Gods range them-"ſelves on the ſide of the ſtrongeſt *."

Laſtly, Religion, by annexing eternal happineſs to the military virtues, had given the laſt degree of activity to the ardour and propenſity theſe people had for war. There were no fatigues, no dangers nor torments capable of damping a paſſion ſo well countenanced, and the deſire of meriting ſo great a reward. We have ſeen what motives this religion offered to its votaries; and we cannot fail to recall them in reading ſome inſtances of that courage which diſtinguiſhed the ancient Scandinavians, and of their contempt of death itſelf, which I ſhall produce from the moſt authentic chronicles of Iceland.

Hiſtory informs us, that HAROLD ſurnamed BLAATAAND or BLUE TOOTH (a king of Denmark, who reigned in the middle of the tenth century) had founded on the coaſts of Pomerania, which he had ſubdued, a city

* Tacit. hiſt. lib. IV. c. 17. Pelloutier hiſt. des Celtes, tom. I. p. 415.

a city named Julin or Jomſburg; where he ſent a colony of young Danes, and beſtowed the government on a celebrated warrior named Palnatoko. This new Lycurgus had made of that city a ſecond Sparta, and every thing was directed to this ſingle end, to form complete ſoldiers. The author who has left us the hiſtory of this colony aſſures us, that "it was forbidden there ſo much as to mention the name of "Fear, even in the moſt imminent dangers *." No citizen of Jomſburg was to yield to any number however great, but to fight intrepidly without flying, even from a very ſuperior force. The ſight of preſent and inevitable death would have been no excuſe with them for making any the leaſt complaint, or for ſhewing the ſlighteſt apprehenſion. And this legiſlator really appears to have eradicated from the minds of moſt of the youths bred up under him, all traces of that ſentiment ſo natural and ſo univerſal, which makes men think on their deſtruction with horror. Nothing can ſhew this better than a ſingle fact in their hiſtory, which deſerves to have place here for its ſingularity. Some of them having made an irruption into the territories of a powerful Norwegian lord, named Haquin, were overcome ſpite of the obſtinacy of their reſiſtance; and the moſt diſtinguiſhed among them being made priſoners, were, according to the cuſtom of thoſe times, condemned to death. The news

* See Jomſwikinga Saga, in Bartholin. de cauſ. contempt. mort. lib. i. c. 5.

news of this, far from afflicting them, was, on the contrary, received with joy. The firft who was led to punifhment was content to fay, without changing countenance, and without expreffing the leaft fign of fear, "Why fhould not the fame happen to me as did "to my father? He died, and fo muft I." A warrior, named Thorchill, who was to cut off the head of the fecond, having afked him what he felt at the fight of death, he anfwered, that "he remembered "too well the laws of Jomfburg to utter any words "that denoted fear." The third, in reply to the fame queftion, faid, "he rejoiced to die with glory, "and that he preferred fuch a death to an infamous "life like that of Thorchill's." The fourth made an anfwer much longer and more extraordinary. "I "fuffer with a good heart; and the prefent hour is "to me very agreeable. I only beg of you," added he, addreffing himfelf to Thorchill, "to be very quick "in cutting off my head; for it is a queftion often "debated by us at Jomfburg, whether one retains a-"ny fenfe after being beheaded. I will therefore "grafp this knife in my hand; if after my head is "cut off, I ftrike it towards you, it will fhew I have "not loft all fenfe: if I let it drop, it will be a proof "of the contrary. Make hafte therefore, and decide "the difpute." 'Thorchill' adds the hiftorian, 'cut 'off his head in moft expeditious manner, but the 'knife, as might be expected, dropt from his hand.' The fifth fhewed the fame tranquillity, and died rallying and jeering his enemies. The fixth begged of Thorchill,

Thorchill, that he might not be led to puniſhment like a ſheep *; "ſtrike the blow in my face," ſaid he, "I "will ſit ſtill without ſhrinking; and take notice "whether I once wink my eyes, or betray one ſign "of fear in my countenance. For we inhabitants of "Jomſburg are uſed to exerciſe ourſelves in trials of "this ſort, ſo as to meet the ſtroke of death, without "once moving." He kept his promiſe before all the ſpectators, and received the blow without betraying the leaſt ſign of fear, or ſo much as winking his eyes†. The ſeventh, ſays the hiſtorian, "was a very beauti- "ful young man, in the flower of his age. His long "fair hair, as fine as ſilk, floated in curls and ringlets "on his ſhoulders. Thorchill aſked him what he "thought of death? I receive it willingly, ſaid he, "ſince I have fulfilled the greateſt duty of life, and "have ſeen all thoſe put to death whom I would not "ſurvive. I only beg of you one favour, not to let "my hair be touched by a ſlave, or ſtained with my "blood ‡."

This conſtancy in the laſt moments was not, however, the peculiar effect of the laws and education of the

* Barthol. lib. i. c. 5. p. 51.

† Barthol. ibid.

‡ In Bartholin it is, *Id unicum a te peto, ne mancipia me ad mortem ducant, neu quis te inferior capillum meum teneat*, &c. M. Mallet has omitted the circumſtance of the hair in his 2d. edit.

Bartholin gives the ſpeech of the EIGHTH perſon, which, though ſpirited, being not ſo ſtriking as the former, our author has omitted. T.

the Jomſburgians. The other Danes have often given the ſame proofs of intrepidity; or rather this was the general character of all the inhabitants of Scandinavia. It was with them an inſtance of ſhameful puſillanimity to utter upon ſuch occaſions the leaſt groan, or to change countenance, but eſpecially to ſhed tears. The Danes, ſays Adam of Bremen *, "are remarkable for "this, that if they have committed any crime, they "had rather ſuffer death than blows. There is no "other puniſhment for them but either the axe, or "ſervitude. As for groans, complaints and other "bemoanings of that kind, in which WE find relief, "they are ſo deteſted by the Danes, that they think "it mean to weep for their ſins, or for the death of "their deareſt relations." But if a private ſoldier looked upon tears as peculiar to weakneſs or ſlavery, their great warriours, the chiefs, all who aſpired to fame and glory, carried the contempt of death much further. King Regner, who, as I have once before obſerved, died ſinging the pleaſure of receiving death in the field of battle, cries out at the end of a ſtanza, "the hours of my life are paſſed away, I ſhall die "laughing †:" And many paſſages in ancient hiſtory plainly ſhew that this was not a poetical hyperbole. Saxo, ſpeaking of a ſingle combat, ſays, that one of the champions FELL, LAUGHED, AND DIED, an epitaph

* Adam Bremen. de ſitu Daniæ, c. 213.

† Barthol. p. 4.

taph as ſhort as energetic *. An officer belonging to a king of Norway, celebrating in verſe the death of his maſter, concludes his elogium with theſe words, " It ſhall hereafter be recorded in hiſtories, that king " Halfer died laughing †." A warrior having been thrown upon his back, in wreſtling with his enemy, and the latter finding himſelf without his arms, the vanquiſhed perſon promiſed to wait without changing his poſture while he fetched a ſword to kill him ; and he faithfully kept his word. To die with his arms in his hand was the vow of every free man ; and the pleaſing idea they had of this kind of death, would naturally lead them to dread ſuch as proceeded from diſeaſe and old age. In the joy, therefore, which they teſtified at the approach of a violent death, they might frequently expreſs no more than their real ſentiments, though doubtleſs it was ſometimes intermixt with oſtentation. The general tenor of their conduct proves that they were moſt commonly ſincere in this ; and ſuch as know the power which education, example and prejudice have over men, will find no difficulty in receiving the multitude of teſtimonies, which antiquity hath left us of their extraordinary valour. " The " philoſophy of the Cimbri," ſays Valerius Maximus, " is gay and couragious : they leap for joy in a " battle, that they are going to quit life in ſo glori-

" ous

* Saxo Gram. lib. ii. et vide Bodvar's Biarka Saga apud Barthol. lib. i. c. 1. p. 5.

† Barthol. p. 6.

" ous a manner: in ſickneſs they lament for fear of " a ſhameful and miſerable end *." Cicero remarks, that in proportion as men are intrepid in war, they are weak and impatient under bodily pains. " Happy " in their miſtake," ſays Lucan, " are the people " who live beneath the Pole! perſuaded that death is " only a paſſage to a long life, they are undiſturbed " by the moſt grievous of all fears, that of dying. " Hence they eagerly run to arms, and their minds " are capable of meeting death: hence they eſteem it " cowardice to ſpare a life which they ſhall ſo ſoon " recover †." The hiſtory of ancient Scandinavia is full of paſſages expreſſive of this manner of thinking. The illuſtrious warriors, who found themſelves waſting by ſome lingering illneſs, were not always content barely to excuſe their fate. They often availed themſelves of the few moments that were yet remaining, to ſhake off life by a way more glorious. Some of them would be carried into a field of battle, that

 they

* Val. Max. lib. ii. cap. 6. p. 11. Cicero Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. ii. cap. ult.

† As only a looſe paraphraſe of Lucan's words is given in the text, the Reader will be glad to ſee the original here.

Orbe alio longæ, canitis ſi cognita, vitæ
Mors media eſt. Certe populi quos deſpicit Arctos
Felices errore ſuo! quos ille timorum
Maximus haud urget lethi metus; inde ruendi
In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces
Mortis. et ignavum rediture parcere vitæ.

Lib. i.

they might die in the engagement: others slew themselves: many procured this melancholy service to be performed them by their friends, who considered this as a most sacred duty. "There is on a mountain in "Iceland," says the author of an old Icelandic romance *, "a rock so high, that no animal can fall "from the top and live. Here men betake them- "selves when they are afflicted and unhappy. From "this place all our ancestors, even without waiting "for sickness, have departed unto Odin. It is use- "less, therefore, to give ourselves up to groans and "complaints

* The old SAGA, or history here quoted, contains a mixture of truth and fiction, but shews us plainly what opinion was held of SUICIDE, and how commonly it was practised heretofore in the North.

Procopius attributes the same thing to the Heruli, a Gothic people. *Apud Herulos*, says he, *nec senibus, nec ægrotis fas erat vitam producere: et si quem senium occupasset, aut morbus, rogare is cogebatur propinquos, ut quamprimum hominum numero eum tollerent.* Procop. Goth. lib. ii. c. 14.

Silius says of the ancient inhabitants of Spain,

Prodiga gens animæ, & properare facillima mortem;
Namque ubi transcendit florentes viribus annos,
Impatiens ævi spernit novisse senectam
Et fati modus in dextra est.

All these authorities, which it would be easy to multiply, prove that I attribute nothing to the northern nations, which is not positively confirmed by historians, as well strangers as their own countrymen; and that one cannot reproach the ancient Scandinavians with these barbarous prejudices, without condemning at the same time the ancestors of half the nations of Europe. Vid. Pelloutier, tom. ii. lib. 3. ch. 18. *First Edit.*

"complaints, or to put our relations to needlefs ex-"pences, fince we can eafily follow the example of "our fathers, who have all gone by the way of this "rock." There was fuch another in Sweden, appropriated to the fame ufe, which was figuratively called the HALL OF ODIN, becaufe it was a kind of veftibule or entry to the palace of that God *. Laftly, if none of thefe reliefs were afforded, and efpecially when Chriftianity had banifhed thefe cruel practices, the heroes confoled themfelves at leaft by putting on complete

* We have a particular defcription of this place by Sir William Temple; which it will be worth while to produce at large.

"I will not," he fays, "trouble "myfelf with more paffages out "of the Runic poems concerning "this fuperftitious principle (of "preferring a violent death, &c.) "but will add a teftimony of it, "which was given me at Nimeguen, by Count Oxenftern, the "firft of the Swedifh embaffadors "in that affembly. In difcourfe "upon this fubject, and in confir-"mation of this opinion having "been general among the Goths "of thofe countries; he told me "there was ftill in Sweden a place "which was a memorial of it, "and was called ODIN's HALL. "That it was a great bay in the "fea, encompaffed on three fides "with fteep and rugged rocks; "and that in the time of the Go-"thic paganifm, men that were "either fick of difeafes they ef-"teemed mortal or incurable, or "elfe grown invalid with age, and "thereby paft all military action, "and fearing to die meanly and "bafely (as they efteemed it) in "their beds, they ufually caufed "themfelves to be brought to the "neareft part of thefe rocks, and "from thence threw themfelves "down into the fea, hoping by "the boldnefs of fuch a violent "death, to renew the pretence of "admiffion into the Hall of Odin "which they had loft, by failing "to die in combat, and with their "arms." Mifcellanea, Part II. Effay 3. part. 4.

plete armour as soon as they found their end approaching; thus making (as it were) a solemn protest against the kind of death to which they were forced involuntarily to submit. After this, it will not be thought wonderful that the clients of a great lord, and all those who inlisted under a chief for some expedition, should make a vow not to survive their commander; or that this vow should always be performed in all its rigour *. Neither will it be surprizing that private soldiers should sometimes form among themselves a kind of society or confraternity, in which the several members engaged, at the expence of their own lives, to avenge the death of their associates, provided it were honourable and violent. All these dangers were, in their opinion, so many favourable and precious occasions of meriting glory and eternal happiness. Accordingly, we never find any among these people guilty of cowardice, and the bare suspicion of that vice was always attended with universal contempt. A man who had lost his buckler, or who had received a wound behind, durst never more appear in public. In the history of England †, we see a famous Danish captain named Siward, who had sent his son to attack a province in Scotland, ask with great coolness those who brought the news of his death,

* The same thing prevailed among diverse Celtic nations: they called those who thus engaged themselves to their chiefs, *soldurii*. *First Edit.*

† Brompton. Ubb. Jorn. Chronic. p. 946.

death, whether he had received his wounds behind or before? The meſſengers telling him he was wounded before, the father cries out, "then I have only cauſe "to rejoice: for any other death would have been "unworthy of me and my ſon." A conqueror could not exerciſe a more terrible vengeance upon his captives, than to condemn them to ſlavery. "There is," ſays Saxo, "in the heart of the Danes, an inſurmountable averſion to ſervitude, which makes them "eſteem it the moſt dreadful of all conditions *." The ſame hiſtorian deſcribes to us a king of Denmark, named Frotho, taken in battle by a king his enemy, and obſtinately refuſing all offers of life which that prince could make him. "To what end," ſays he, "ſhould I reſerve myſelf for ſo great a diſgrace? "What good can the remainder of my life afford me, "that can counter-balance the remembrance of my "misfortunes, and the regret which my miſery "would cauſe me? And even if you ſhould reſtore "me my kingdom, if you ſhould bring me back my "ſiſter, if you ſhould repair all the loſs of my trea-"ſure, would all this recover my honour? All theſe "benefits would never replace me in my former "ſtate, but future ages would always ſay, FROTHO "HATH BEEN TAKEN BY HIS ENEMY." In all combats, and the number of them is prodigious in the ancient hiſtories of the North, we always find both parties continually repeating the words glory, honour,

* Saxo Gramm. lib. xii.

nour, and contempt of death, and by this means raising one another to that pitch of enthusiasm, which produces extraordinary actions. A general never forgot to remind his troops of these motives when he was going to give battle; and not unfrequently they prevented him, and flew to the engagement of themselves, chanting songs of war, marching in cadence, and raising shouts of joy.

Lastly, like the heroes of Homer, those of ancient Scandinavia, in the excess of their over-boiling courage, dared to defy the Gods themselves. "Though "they should be stronger than the Gods," says a boastful warrior speaking of his enemies, "I would "absolutely fight them *." And in Saxo Grammaticus we hear another wishing ardently that he could but meet with Odin, that he might attack him: expressing his mind by verses to this effect. "Where "at present is he, whom they call Odin, that warri- "or so completely armed, who hath but one eye to "guide him? Ah, if I could but see him, this re- "doubted spouse of Frigga; in vain should he be co- "vered with his snow-white buckler, in vain mount- "ed upon his lofty steed, he should not leave his a- "bode of Lethra without a wound. It is lawful to "encounter a warrior god †."

A

* Bartholin. lib. i. c. 6.

† Saxo Gram. lib. ii. apud Barthol. lib. i. c. 8.—The same author relates that a Danish prince, named Hother, resisted the united forces of Odin, Thor, and the squadrons

A paſſion ſo ſtrong, ſo general and ſo blind could not but give a tincture of its character to whatever it could poſſibly extend to; and therefore we muſt not be ſurprized that they ſhould take it into their heads to deify the inſtruments of war, without which that paſſion could not have been gratified. From the earlieſt antiquity, they paid divine honours to their ſwords, their battle-axes, and their pikes. The Scythians commonly ſubſtituted a ſword as the moſt proper ſymbol to repreſent the ſupreme god. It was by planting a ſpear in the middle of a field, that they uſually

drons of the gods. "And the victory," he adds, "would have remained with the gods, if Hother, breaking through their thickeſt ranks, and aſſailing them with ſuch fury as a mortal can ſuperior beings, had not rendered the club of the god Thor uſeleſs, by cutting it off at the handle. Weakened by this ſudden and unexpected ſtroke, the gods were forced to betake themſelves to flight." [Saxo. lib. iii. Barthol. lib. i. c. 6.] It was a received opinion among them, that a man might attack and fight the gods; and it is needleſs to remark with Saxo, that theſe were only imaginary deities. No one is tempted to take ſuch relations literally, and they only deſerve to be mentioned becauſe they ſhew us what manner of thinking prevailed among the people who invented ſtories of this ſort. From them we may at leaſt infer that the confidence with which their bodily ſtrength and courage inſpired theſe ancient Danes muſt have been exceſſive to make them brave, and defy whatever was moſt formidable in their ſyſtem of religion. But Diomedes's wounding Venus concealed in a cloud, his defying Jupiter, as well as the other combats of men with the gods deſcribed in the Iliad, have already ſhown us, to what a degree of intoxication and madneſs men may arrive, who think themſelves above all fear. *Firſt Edit.*

ſually marked out the place ſet apart for prayers and ſacrifices: and when they had relaxed from their primitive ſtrictneſs, ſo far as to build temples and ſet up idols in them, they yet preſerved ſome traces of the ancient cuſtom, by putting a ſword in the hands of ODIN's ſtatues. The reſpect they had for their arms made them alſo ſwear by inſtruments ſo valuable and ſo uſeful, as being the moſt ſacred things they knew. Accordingly, in an ancient Icelandic poem, a Scandinavian, to aſſure himſelf of a perſon's good faith, requires him to ſwear "by the ſhoulder of a horſe, and "the edge of a SWORD *." This oath was uſual more eſpecially on the eve of ſome great engagement: the ſoldiers engaged themſelves by an oath of this kind, not to flee though their enemies ſhould be never ſo ſuperior in number.

From

* The paſſage at large, as tranſlated by Bartholin (lib. i. cap. 6.) is,

Juramenta mihi prius omnia dabis
Ad latus navis, et ad ſcuti extremitatem,
Ad equi armum, et ad GLADII ACIEM, &c.

It is therefore with peculiar propriety and decorum (as is well obſerved by his commentators) that our Shakeſpear makes his PRINCE OF DENMARK call upon his companions to SWEAR UPON HIS SWORD:

—— —— Come hither gentlemen,
And lay your hands againe upon my ſword,
Never to ſpeake of this that you have heard,
Sweare by my SWORD. —— ——

HAMLET. A. I. ſc. ult. T.

From the ſame ſource proceeded that propenſity to duels and ſingle combats, ſo remarkable among all the 'Gothic *' nations, and which of all their barbarous cuſtoms, has been moſt religiouſly kept up by their preſent deſcendants. In Denmark, and through all the North, they provoked a man to fight a duel, by publicly calling him NIDDING or "infamous †:"

* Celtic. Orig.

† In the ſame manner as giving the LIE is the higheſt provocation in modern times, becauſe it implies a charge of meanneſs, falſhood and cowardice: ſo the word NIDING or NITHING anciently included in it the ideas of extreme wickedneſs, meanneſs and infamy. It ſignified a villanous baſe wretch, a daſtardly coward, a ſordid ſtingy worthleſs creature: (*Homo ſcelera-tus, nequam, apoſtata, fœdifragus, ſumme infamis, ſordide parcus, &c.* being derived by the greateſt etymologiſt of the preſent age from the Icelandic NYD, *rejectanea, contumelia, &c.* Vid. LYE, in Junii Etymolog. Anglican.) No wonder that an imputation of this kind ſhould be ſo reproachful among an open and brave people: or that they would rather do any thing than incur it.

We have a remarkable proof in Engliſh hiſtory how much this name was dreaded and abhorred by our anceſtors. King William Rufus having occaſion to draw together ſuddenly a body of forces, only ſent word to all ſuch as held of him in fee, that thoſe who did not repair to his aſſiſtance, ſhould be deemed NITHING; and without further ſummons, they all flocked to his ſtandard. *Rex irâ inflammatus*, ſays Matthew Paris, *ſtipendiarios milites ſuos Anglos congregat, et abſque morâ, ut ad obſidionem veniant, jubet, niſi velint ſub nomine* NITHING, *quod Latine* NEQUAM *ſonat, recenſeri. Angli (qui nihil contumelioſius et vilius eſtimant quam hujuſmodi ignominioſo vocabulo notari) catervatim ad regem confluentes, ingentes copias conficiunt.* (M. Par. ſub ann. 1089.) The word NITHING for ſome ages after continued in uſe in this kingdom, but chiefly in the ſenſe of STINGY,

NIGGARDLY,

for he who had received ſo deep a ſtain, without endeavouring to waſh it out with the blood of his adverſary, would have loſt much more than the life he was ſo deſirous to ſave. Baniſhed by public indignation from the ſociety of men, degraded from his quality of citizen, and ſcarce regarded as a human creature, he had nothing left for it but a ſhameful and inſecure flight.

The dreadful conſequences of their ſenſibility with regard to what we falſely call HONOUR, extended often from private perſons to a whole people; and nations, blind to their true welfare, waged long and cruel wars for ſuch chimerical intereſts as really ought not to have armed one ſingle individual againſt another. Under the reign of Harald Blaatand, king of Denmark, the Icelanders provoked by his having detained one of their ſhips laden with merchandiſe, flew for revenge to a ſpecies of arms that were familiar to them, and made verſes upon him ſo very ſatirical, that Harald, ſtung to the quick, ſent out a fleet to

NIGGARDLY, &c. The Tranſlator has ſeen an ancient MS. poem, that was written between the reigns of Edward III. and Edward IV. in which a perſon is thus exhorted,

Looke thou be kind and curteous aye,
Of meate and drinke be never Nithing.

which ſenſe of the word ſtill obtains in Denmark, as we learn from Bartholin. *Denotat* NIDING *modernis Danis virum ſordide parcum atque tenacem.* Lib. i. c. 7. p. 98. T.

to ravage the iſland. This obliged the inhabitants to make a law, which is ſtill extant in their ancient code, forbidding any perſon, under capital puniſhment, to compoſe ſatirical verſes upon the kings of Denmark, Sweden, or Norway.

After ſo many efforts to acquire glory, it was very natural to think how to perpetuate it. To this end the ancient Scandinavians employed various means ſuitable to the groſſneſs and rudeneſs of the times; which if they have deceived the expectation of thoſe who hoped for fame and immortality from them, have done them no great injuſtice. The moſt common method conſiſted in burying the heroes under little hills which they raiſed in the middle of ſome plain *, and

* Vide Bartholin. de cauſ. contempt. à Dan. mortis, lib. i. c. 8.

There is room to believe that this cuſtom of burying the dead under little hills or mounts of earth prevailed among many of the ancient inhabitants of Europe. Iſidore ſpeaks of it as a general cuſtom. *Apud majores*, he ſays, *Potentes aut ſub montibus, aut in montibus ſepeliuntur.* (Orig. lib. xv. c. 11.) And Virgil and Servius expreſsly attribute it to the ancient Italians: See Servius on that verſe of Aen. II.

——— Fuit ingens monte ſub alto
Regis Dercenni terreno ex aggere buſtum.

This cuſtom Bartholin thinks ODIN brought with him into the North out of Scythia; where it anciently prevailed, as we learn from Herodotus, lib. iv. c. 71. And Mallet aſſures us that ſome travellers "have ſeen in Crim Tar-"tary (part of the ancient Scy-"thia) and in the neighbouring "countries, artificial hills like thoſe

and in giving to these hillocks, and sometimes to the plains themselves the name of the person who was there interred. This rude monument kept up at the same time the memory of the hero, and the emulation of

" those which are found in Den-" mark and throughout all the " North" [Mallet. *First Edit.*] See also Bell's Travels, vol. i. This Traveller found these sepulchral hills in his journey to China.

We have in England many ancient monuments of this kind, which are of such remote antiquity that it is not easy to decide whether they ought to be ascribed to our Gothic ancestors the Saxons and Danes; or to the more ancient inhabitants of 'Gaulish' race, viz. the Britons, &c. Some antiquaries are for referring every vestige of this sort to the times of the Druids: but it is very certain that the ancient Scandinavians buried in the same manner. indeed, this sort of monument is so simple and obvious, that it has doubtless prevailed among many nations of very different original.

Monuments of this kind particularly abound in the south-west parts of this island. " There are " many in Wiltshire, round and " copped, which are called Bur-" rows or Barrows; perhaps " raised in memory of the soldiers " slain there: For bones are found " in them; and I have read that " it was a custom among the nor-" thern people, that every soldier " who survived a battle, should " bring a helmet full of earth to-" wards raising of monuments for " their slain fellows." So far from Cambden: to which Gibson adds, that " upon these downs (in Wilt-" shire) are several sorts of Bar-" rows. 1. Small circular trenches " with very little elevation in the " middle. 2. Ordinary barrows " 3. Barrows with ditches round " them. 4. Large oblong bar-" rows, some with trenches round " them, others without. 5. Ob-" long barrows with stones set up " all round them." Of this last sort, " that large oblong barrow, " called Milbarrow, is more espe-" cially remarkable, as being en-" vironed with great stones about " 6 or 7 feet high:" which was doubtless " the sepulchre of some " Danish commander."—Cambden's Britannia by Gibson, 1722 Vol. i. p. 127, &c. T.

of the neighbouring inhabitants. We find in Denmark at this day a great number of ſuch artificial hills, which bear the name of ſome warrior, or king of antient times *.

They commonly pitched upon ſome public place, ſome great road, ſome fountain or other well-frequented ſpot, as the moſt proper to raiſe theſe tombs in. They adorned them frequently with one or more large ſtones and epitaphs, as will be explained when I come to ſpeak of the funerals of this people. But above all, they had recourſe to the art of poetry, when they were diſpoſed to immortalize their kings or great captains. The SCALDS or bards were employed to compoſe odes or ſongs, which related all their moſt ſhining exploits, and ſometimes the whole hiſtory of their lives. Theſe ſongs were propagated from one reciter to another: and there was no public ſolemnity in which they were not ſung or chanted. The praiſes which theſe poets gave to valour, the warlike enthuſiaſm which animated their verſes, the great care men took to learn them from their infancy, being

* Of this kind was the tomb of HAMLET, as deſcribed by Saxo, *Inſignis ejus ſepulturâ ac nomine campus apud Jutiam extat*, which field we are told is called AMLETS-HEDE to this day. (Saxo. lib. iv. Barthol. p. 119.) In like manner HUBBESTOWE in Devonſhire received its name from HUBBA the Dane, who was ſlain and buried there in the year 879; as an ancient hiſtorian thus relates it, *Dani cadaver* HUBBÆ *inter occiſos invenientes, illud cum clamore maximo ſepelierunt, cumulum apponentes* HUBBELOWE *vocaverunt.* Brompton ad ann. 873. Vid. Cambden. Gibſon. vol. i. p. 47. Barth. lib. i. c. 8. T.

ing all of them the natural effects of the ruling passion of this people, served in their turn to strengthen and extend it. Lastly, the common objects which they usually had before their eyes, the rocks scattered all over the country, the bucklers, the trophies raised in the field of battle, the walls and hangings of their houses, all contributed to preserve the memory of great actions and intrepid warriors, by means of the Runic characters, the hieroglyphics, and the symbols, which were engraven or inscribed upon them.

A people who nourished so strong a passion for war, could seldom be at a loss for occasions of it. Accordingly the ancient Scandinavians were continually involved in one hostile dispute or other, and their whole history would have consisted of nothing else but melancholy and disgusting details of these wars, if they had been at the needless pains to write it. But the little that is left of their history is more than sufficient to satisfy the curiosity of those who admire courage, no matter with what spirit it is animated; and who are astonished that men should be so prodigal of their lives, when they were ignorant of the art how to render them agreeable. We have already observed, that the inhabitants of Germany and the North were accustomed every spring to hold a general assembly, at which every free-man appeared completely armed, and ready to go upon any expedition. At this meeting they considered in what quarter they should make war: they examined what causes of complaint had been received from the several neigh-

bouring

bouring nations, their power or their riches, the eaſineſs with which they might be overcome, the proſpect of booty, or the neceſſity of avenging ſome injury. When they had determined on the war, and ſettled the plan of the campaign, they immediately began their march, furniſhed each of them with a proper quantity of proviſions; and almoſt every grown man in the country made haſte to join the army thus tumultuouſly aſſembled. We are not to wonder after this, that there ſhould iſſue from the North ſwarms of ſoldiers, as formidable for their numbers as their valour: and we ought not haſtily to conclude from hence, that Scandinavia formerly contained more people than it does at preſent. I know what is related of the incredible multitudes of men, which that country is ſaid to have poured forth: but on the other hand, who does not know how much nations and hiſtorians have been, in all ages, inclined to exaggeration in this reſpect; ſome being deſirous to enhance the power of their country, and others, when it has been conquered, being willing to ſave its credit by making it yield only to ſuperior numbers? But the greateſt part have been guilty of enlargement from no other motive than a blind love of the marvellous, authoriſed by the difficulty of pronouncing with certainty on a ſubject, in which men often commit great miſtakes even after long reſearches. Beſides this, it is very probable that many particular circumſtances of thoſe famous expeditions made by the Scandinavians, have contributed to countenance that name of

Vagina

Vagina gentium, which an hiſtorian gives their country *. For when theſe emigrations were made by ſea, the promptitude and celerity with which they could carry their ravages from one coaſt to another, might eaſily multiply armies in the eyes of the people they attacked, and who heard many different irruptions ſpoken of almoſt at the ſame time. If on the contrary, they iſſued forth by land, they found every where on their march nations as greedy of fame and plunder as themſelves, who joining with them, afterwards paſſed for people of the ſame original with the firſt ſwarm which put itſelf in motion. It ſhould alſo be conſidered, that theſe emigrations did not all of them take place at the ſame time; and that after a nation was thus exhauſted, it probably remained inactive until it had been able to recruit its numbers. The vaſt extent of Scandinavia being in thoſe times divided among many different people who were little known, and only deſcribed by ſome one general name, as that of Goths, for inſtance, or Normans, (that is Northern men),

* Jornandes de rebus Geticis.— Sir William Temple calls it THE NORTHERN HIVE: and Milton has taken a compariſon from thence to expreſs exuberant multitudes.

"A multitude like which the populous North
"Pour'd never from her frozen loins, to paſs
"Rhine or the Danaw, when her barbarous ſons
"Came like a deluge on the South, and ſpread
"Beneath Gibraltar to the Lybian ſands."

Par. Loſt. B. I. 351. T.

men), it could not exactly be aſcertained from what country each troop originally came, and ſtill leſs to what degree of depopulation each country was reduced after loſing ſo great a quantity of its inhabitants. But what, in my opinion, beſt accounts for thoſe numerous and frequent inundations of northern people, is that we have reaſon to believe, entire nations often engaged in enterpriſes of this ſort: even the women and children ſometimes marched in the rear of the armies, when a whole people either by inconſtancy, by indigence, or the attraction of a milder climate, reſolved to change their place of abode. Projects of this kind, it is true, appear very ſtrange to us at preſent: but it is no leſs true that our anceſtors the 'Goths and' Celts often engaged in them. In the time of Cæſar, the Helvetians, that is, the ancient inhabitants of Swiſſerland, deſirous to eſtabliſh themſelves in Gaul, burnt their houſes with their own hands, together with ſuch of their effects as were not portable, and followed by their wives and children, ſet out with a reſolution of never more returning home. What a multitude might not one expect ſuch a nation to form? And yet Cæſar remarks * that according to the muſters of the Helvetians themſelves, found in their camp, they did not exceed three hundred and ſixty thouſand in all, including old men, women and children: a number, without diſpute, ſmall compared with that of the inhabitants of the ſame

* De bello Gallic. lib. i. c. 11,

country at prefent. The expedition of the Cimbri had alfo been an entire tranfplantation of that people: for it appears, by the requeft they made to the Romans, that their view was to obtain new lands to fettle in. They, as well as the Helvetians, took with them their wives and children: and accordingly Cimbria (at prefent Slefwick and Jutland) continued after this emigration fo depopulated, that at the end of two whole centuries, viz. in the time of Tacitus, it had not been able to recover itfelf, as we have already remarked from this hiftorian, who had been himfelf in Germany.

The expedition of the Anglo-Saxons furnifhes us with proofs no lefs convincing than thofe I have mentioned. The firft Angles, who paffed into Britain under the conduct of Hengift and Horfa, were a mere handful of men. The ancient Saxon Chronicle * informs us, that they had only three veffels, and it fhould feem that their number could not well exceed a thoufand. Some other fwarms having afterwards followed their example, their country was reduced to a mere defert †, and continued deftitute of inhabitants for more than two centuries; being ftill in this ftate in the time of Bede, from whom the author of the Saxon Chronicle borrowed this fact. Let any one judge after this, whether it was always out of the fuperfluity of its inhabitants, as hath been frequently afferted,

* Chronic. Anglo-Sax. à Gibfon. edit. p. 13.

† See a Note on this fubject towards the end of the next Chapter. T.

aſſerted, that the North poured forth its torrents on the countries they overwhelmed. For my part, I have not been able to diſcover any proofs that their emigrations ever proceeded from want of room at home: on the contrary, I find enough to convince me that their country would eaſily have received an additional number of inhabitants. When Alboin formed the project of leading the Lombards into Italy, he demanded auxiliaries from the Saxons, his allies. Twenty thouſand Saxons, with their wives and children, accompanied the Lombards into Italy: and the kings of France ſent colonies of Swabians to occupy the country which the Saxons had left deſert. Thus we ſee the Saxons, who are thought to have been one of the moſt numerous people of Germany, could not ſend forth this feeble ſwarm without depopulating their own country: But this is not all. The twenty thouſand Saxons, diſagreeing with the Lombards, quitted Italy, and returned back (undiminiſhed in number) into their own country, which they found poſſeſſed by the Swabians above-mentioned. This preſently gave riſe to a war, notwithſtanding all the remonſtrances of the Swabians, who, as an ancient hiſtorian * aſſures us, demonſtrated to the Saxons, that both nations might eaſily ſhare the country among them, and live all of them in it very commodiouſly. I make no doubt but there were throughout all Saxony, as well as Scandinavia, vaſt tracts of land which

* Paul. Diacon. de geſt. Longobard. lib. ii. c. 6.

which lay in their original uncultivated ſtate, having never been grubbed up and cleared. Let any one read the deſcription which Adam of Bremen * gives of Denmark in the eleventh century, and he will be convinced that the coaſts alone were peopled, but that the interior parts formed only one vaſt foreſt.

From what has been ſaid, therefore, I think one may ſafely conclude, that as all were ſoldiers among the ancient Scandinavians, they could eaſily fill all Europe with the noiſe of their arms, and ravage for a long time different parts of it, although the ſum total of the inhabitants ſhould have been much leſs than it is at preſent. If it was otherwiſe, we muſt acknowledge, that this extreme population can be very ill reconciled, either with what hiſtory informs of the manners, cuſtoms and principles of the ancient Scandinavians, or with the ſoundeſt notions of policy with reſpect to what makes the true proſperity of a people. For we cannot allow them ſuch a ſuperiority over us in the number of inhabitants, without granting them at the ſame time a proportionable excellence in their cuſtoms, manners, civil regulations, and conſtitution of government, as ſo many efficacious cauſes of the good or bad ſtate of all ſocieties, and conſequently of their greater or leſs degree of population. But who can perſuade himſelf, that thoſe ſavage times when men ſowed and reaped but little, when they had no other choice but that of the deſtructive profeſſion

* Adam Brem. hiſt. eccleſ. Cap. de ſitu Daniæ.

profeſſion of arms, or of a drowſy indolence no leſs deſtructive; when every petty nation was torn to pieces either by private revenge and factions within, or by war with their neighbours from without; when they had no other ſubſiſtence but rapine, and no other ramparts but wide frontiers laid waſte; who, I ſay, can believe ſuch a ſtate as this to be more favourable to the propagation of the human ſpecies, than that wherein mens goods and perſons are in full ſecurity; wherein the fields are covered with labourers, and their cities, rich and numerous, flouriſh in tranquillity; wherein the people are left to breathe during long intervals of peace, and there is never more than a ſmall part of the inhabitants to whom war is deſtructive; and laſtly, wherein commerce, manufactures, and the arts offer ſo many reſources, and ſecond ſo well that natural propenſity to increaſe and multiply, which nothing but the fear of indigence can check and reſtrain?

Let us now conſider in what manner the ancient nations of the North made war. When an army was upon the march, the whole body, as well generals as private ſoldiers, equally deſired to terminate the campaign by ſome ſpeedy and deciſive action. Their numbers, their poverty, the want of proviſions, and of the other precautions obſerved at preſent, did not permit theſe people to wait leiſurely the favourable occaſions of giving battle. The plunder, as it was their principal object, ſo it was generally their greateſt reſource: and they were not of a character to brook

either

either long delays, or severe discipline, without which all military knowledge is useless. Naturally impetuous and ardent, they only fought with courage so long as the first heat of their passion continued, and while they were encouraged by the hope of speedy success. Whenever they attacked a civilized and warlike people, they were always sure to be defeated sooner or later, provided the operations were slow and cautious. It was thus Marius repaired the repeated losses which Rome had suffered from the imprudence of the former generals, by only opposing to the Cimbri a studied slackness which blunted the edge of their impetuosity, and threw them into dejection and decay by reducing them to inaction. One need only read the account which the English historians give of the irruptions made by the Danes in England, to be convinced that it was rather by surprize and sudden excursions than by a regular war, that they made a conquest of that country. The northern kings, as well as those of the other parts of Europe, had not then any regular troops, excepting perhaps a small number of armed cavalry which served them for guards. When they would raise an army, they convoked, as we have said above, a general assembly of the free-men of the nation: in this assembly they levied soldiers, and fixed the number which each farm, village or town was to furnish. There is room to believe, that in Denmark, as in other kingdoms, the soldiers received no regular pay; but every one returned home as soon as the expedition was finished,

and

and the booty divided. Neverthelefs, the more valiant among them, unable to lie inactive, till their own country fhould offer them new occafions to enrich and fignalize themfelves, entered into the fervice of fuch other nations as were at war. This was a general cuftom among all the ' Teutonic and' Celtic nations, and ancient hiftory affords us a thoufand examples of it. We have feen the Cimbri afk the Romans to affign them lands, promifing in return to be always ready to arm themfelves in their quarrels. A long time after we frequently fee the Goths and Danes in the pay of the Roman emperors. Saxo informs us, that in fucceeding ages the emperors of Conftantinople intrufted to them the guard of their perfons, and gave them the firft ranks in their armies *.

It is very difficult to fay any thing more particular of the Tactics or military art of thefe ancient nations. If we may judge of the Scandinavians by what is related of feveral other Celtic people †, we fhall not form

* Vid. Pontoppidani gefta et veftig. Dan. extra Dan. tom. i. p. 20.

† What our author fays below of their blind fury, of their diforderly way of fighting, and being readily broken after the firft fhock, was true of the Gauls, &c. whereas the nations of Teutonic race, as they had lefs vivacity, and were lefs choleric, fo they feem to have had more conftancy and perfeverance, and therefore were reducible to better difcipline, as our author allows the Scandinavians to have been " when they had fkilful generals." This conceffion the current of hiftory extorted from him contrary to his theory. However, as it is the character of all barbarous

form a very advantageous idea of them in this respect. The Greek and Latin historians represent them to us as mad men, who in battle only followed the instinct of a blind and brutal rage, without regarding either time or place, or circumstances. At the first sight of an enemy, they darted down upon them with the rapidity of lightning: their impetuosity was a mere drunkenness or intoxication, which made them march to battle with the most extravagant joy: but they marched, we are also told, without any order, and often without ever considering whether the enemy could be forced in their post or not. Hence it frequently happened, that their vigour being exhausted, it was sufficient to resist the first shock, and they were defeated. We must nevertheless suppose, that when skilful generals commanded the armies of the Scandinavians, they very well knew how to maintain a proper subordination, and to moderate that senseless fury, which always over-shoots the mark it aims at; at least we see in the accounts which the ancient chronicles give of their battles, that the authority of their generals was very great, and their orders highly respected.

barbarous nations to be eager and furious in their first attacks, we may suppose the ancient Danes and other Gothic nations would not be able to join battle with the same cool and deliberate discipline as a civilized people like the Romans did: and this will account for what Plutarch and others tell us of the furious ardour of the Cimbri, (in vit. Marii Flor. III 3.) and for whatever similar instances we find in other authors. Vid. Ammian. Marcellin. XVI. 13. p. 146. T.

ſpected. It appears alſo to have been their cuſtom to diſpoſe an army in the form of a triangle or pyramid, the point of which was directed againſt the center of the enemy's army. This body was only compoſed of infantry; the cavalry being generally upon a very inconſiderable footing in the North, whether becauſe the country is ſo divided there by mountains and arms of the ſea, or whether becauſe their principal forces were reſerved for the marine *. They had only ſome ſoldiers who ſerved both on foot and horſeback, like our dragoons at preſent, and who were commonly placed in the flanks of their armies. When they were going to join battle, they raiſed great ſhouts, they claſhed their arms together, they invoked with a great noiſe the name of Odin, and ſometimes ſung hymns in his praiſe. They made an intrenchment with their baggage round the camp, where the women and children remained during the engagement. The conquered in vain fled there for refuge if they happened to be routed. Moſt commonly the women only waited their coming back to cut them in pieces, and if they could not oblige them to return to battle, they choſe to bury themſelves and their children in one common carnage with their huſbands, rather than fall into the hands of a mercileſs conqueror. Such were the dreadful effects of that inhumanity with which war was then carried on. An act of rigour occaſioned an act of cruelty, and this again produced a degree of bar-

* Dalin. Suea. Rikes hiſt. tom. i. ch. 8.

barity ſtill greater. The chains and puniſhments which were reſerved for the vanquiſhed, only ſerved to render the victory the more bloody, and to make it coſt the dearer to thoſe who purchaſed the honour of deſtroying their fellow-creatures without neceſſity.

Their offenſive weapons were commonly the bow and arrows, the battle-axe, and the ſword. The ſword was ſhort, moſt frequently crooked in the manner of a ſcimetar, and hung to a little belt which paſſed over the right ſhoulder. Yet they ſometimes made uſe of very long ſwords which went by a different name *, and theſe were what the Cimbri employed, according to Plutarch. Their champions or heroes took particular care to procure very keen ſwords, which they inſcribed with myſterious characters, and called by ſuch names as might inſpire terror. The battle-axe had two edges; when it had a long handle, it went by the name of an Halberd †, and was particularly affected by the TRABANTS, or thoſe who ſtood upon guard in the caſtles of their kings ‡. The Scandinavians

* The former went by the name of SWERD, whence our Engliſh word SWORD: the latter by that of SPAD or SPADA, a word which is ſtill preſerved in moſt of the ſouthern languages, in the ſame ſenſe.

† The word HALBERD is, I believe, of later date, though it is of Gothic origin, being compounded of the Teutonic, BARDE an Axe, and HALLE a Court; Halberds being the common weapons of Guards. (Johnſon's Dict. Junii Etymol.) The weapon itſelf, however, was probably in uſe from the earlieſt times. T.

‡ TRABANTS (or rather DRABANTS) is the name given to the Yeomen of the Guard in the Northern Courts. T.

vians were reckoned very ſkilful at ſhooting, and accordingly made great uſe of the bow, as we learn from all the ancient chronicles. But beſides theſe arms, ſome warriors employed whatever others they judged moſt proper to ſecond their valour. Thus we ſometimes read of javelins, ſlings, clubs ſtuck round with points, lances, and a ſort of daggers. There was no leſs variety in their defenſive arms. Of theſe the ſhield or buckler was the chief *. This moſt commonly was of wood, bark, or leather. The ſhields belonging to warriors of diſtinction were of iron or braſs, ornamented with painting and ſculpture, often finely gilt, and ſometimes plated over with gold or ſilver. We have ſeen what great account the ancient Danes made of their ſhields, and what penalties were reſerved for ſuch as loſt them in battle. Their ſhape and ſize varied much in different countries: the Scandinavians generally had them of a long oval form, juſt the height of the bearer, in order to protect him from arrows, darts and ſtones. They beſides made uſe of them to carry the dead to the grave, to terrify the enemy by claſhing their arms againſt them, to form upon occaſion a kind of ſhelter or tent when they were obliged to encamp in the open field,
or

* They had two ſorts of theſe, the great Buckler which reſted on the earth, and covered the whole body, called in the Daniſh language SKIOLD, the Shield: and a ſmaller kind, or Target, with which they parried the thruſts and blows of the ſword. See Dalin Suc. Rik. hiſt. tom. i. c. 8. §. 18.

or when the weather was bad. Nor was the ſhield leſs uſeful in naval encounters; for if the fear of falling into their enemies hands obliged one of their warriors to caſt himſelf into the ſea, he could eaſily eſcape by ſwimming upon his buckler *. Laſtly, they ſometimes made a rampart of their ſhields, by locking them one into another, in the form of a circle; and at the end of a campaign, they ſuſpended them againſt the walls of their houſes, as the fineſt decoration with which they could adorn them.

All theſe uſes which they made of their Shields could not but inſpire the Scandinavians with a high reſpect for this part of their armour. It was the moſt noble manner in which an hero could employ his leiſure, to poliſh his ſhield to the utmoſt brightneſs, and to repreſent upon it either ſome gallant feat, or ſome emblematical figure expreſſive of his own inclinations or exploits: and this ſerved to diſtinguiſh him when, being armed at all points, his helmet hid his face. But then every one could not carry theſe painted or carved ſhields indifferently. When a young warrior was at firſt inliſted, they gave him a white and ſmooth buckler,

* Vid. Holberg's Danem. og Norg. Beskrivelſe. chap. xiii.

Plutarch in his Life of Marius tells us, that the Cimbri, when they were paſſing the Alps, took great delight in climbing up to the tops of the mountains over the ice and ſnow, and there placing their BROAD SHIELDS under their bodies, would ſlide down thoſe vaſt ſlippery deſcents.—— Travellers inform us, that the ſame method of deſcending thoſe ſnowy ſlopes is practiſed to this day. T.

buckler, which was called the "Shield of expectation." This he carried till, by ſome ſignal exploit, he had obtained leave to have the proofs of his valour engraven on it: For this reaſon none but princes, or perſons diſtinguiſhed by their ſervices, preſumed to carry ſhields adorned with any ſymbol; the common ſoldiers could not obtain a diſtinction of which the grandees were ſo jealous. Even ſo early as the expedition of the Cimbri, the greateſt part of the army, according to Plutarch, had only white bucklers. In following times, but not till long after, theſe ſymbols which illuſtrious warriors had adopted, paſſing from father to ſon, produced in the North, as well as all over Europe, hereditary coats of arms.

The caſque or helmet was known to the Scandinavians from the moſt early ages. The private ſoldiers had their helmets frequently of leather: thoſe of the officers were of iron, and, if their rank or wealth permitted, of gilded braſs. The coat of mail, the breaſt-plate and back-piece, the armour for the thighs, and other leſs eſſential pieces, were only for ſuch as were able to procure them. Thus, although the invention of all theſe was certainly owing to the Scythians and firſt inhabitants of Europe, few of their deſcendants were for many ages able to obtain them: a ſtriking proof of their indifference, or rather barbarous contempt for all the arts, ſince they cultivated ſo ill even that which was ſo neceſſary to them in battle.

They

They did not carry to a much greater degree of perfection the art of fortifying or attacking places of defence. Their fortreſſes were only rude caſtles ſituate on the ſummits of rocks, and rendered inacceſſible by thick miſhapen walls. As theſe walls ran winding round the caſtles, they often called them by a name which ſignified SERPENTS or DRAGONS, and in theſe they commonly ſecured the women and young maids of diſtinction, who were ſeldom ſafe at a time when ſo many bold warriors were rambling up and down in ſearch of adventures *. It was this cuſtom which gave occaſion to ancient romancers, who knew not how to deſcribe any thing ſimply, to invent ſo many fables concerning princeſſes of great beauty, guarded by dragons, and afterwards delivered by young heroes, who could not atchieve their reſcue till they had overcome thoſe terrible guards. Theſe rude forts were ſeldom taken by the enemy, unleſs by ſurprize or after a long blockade: however, when theſe were of great importance, they raiſed terraces and artificial banks on that ſide of the fort which was loweſt; and by this means annoyed the beſieged by throwing in arrows, ſtones, boiling water, and melted pitch; offenſive arms, which the

* See Dalin. Suea Rikes. hiſt. lib. i. ch. 7. §. 20. & tom. i. ch. 6. §. 19. in note.

the besieged, on their part, were not negligent in returning *.

* There is also reason to believe, that the ancient Northern nations were not wholly unacquainted with the use of the Catapulta and other engines for battering, darting stones, &c. but it is very probable that these were not common, and were besides of very rude and simple construction. Vid. Loccen. Antiq. Suev. Goth. lib. iii. c. 2. apud Dalin. Suea. Rik. hist. *First Edit.*

CHAPTER X.

Of the Maritime Expeditions of the ancient Danes.

HOW formidable ſoever the ancient Scandinavians were by land to moſt of the inhabitants of Europe, it muſt yet be allowed that their maritime expeditions occaſioned ſtill more deſtructive ravages, and greater terror. We cannot read the hiſtory of the eighth, the ninth and tenth centuries, without obſerving with ſurprize, the ſea covered with their veſſels, and from one end of Europe to the other, the coaſts of thoſe countries, now the moſt powerful, a prey to their depredations. During the ſpace of two hundred years, they almoſt inceſſantly ravaged England, and frequently ſubdued it. They often invaded Scotland

Scotland and Ireland, and made incurſions on the coaſts of Livonia, Courland and Pomerania. Already feared, before the time of Charlemagne, they became ſtill more terrible as ſoon as this great monarch's eyes were cloſed. He is known to have ſhed tears on hearing that theſe barbarians had, on ſome occaſion, defied his name, and all the precautions he had taken to oppoſe them. He foreſaw what his people would ſuffer from their courage under his feeble ſucceſſors. And never was preſage better grounded. They ſoon ſpread, like a devouring flame, over Lower Saxony, Friezeland, Holland, Flanders and the banks of the Rhine as far as Mentz. They penetrated into the heart of France, having long before ravaged the coaſts; from various parts theyfound their way up the Somme, the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne and the Rhone. Within the ſpace of thirty years, they frequently pillaged and burnt Paris, Amiens, Orleans, Poitiers, Bourdeaux, Toulouſe, Saintes, Angouleme, Nants, and Tours. They ſettled themſelves in Camargue, at the mouth of the Rhone, from whence they waſted Provence and Dauphiny as far as Valence. In ſhort, they ruined France *, levied immenſe tribute on its monarchs, burnt the palace of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle, and, in concluſion, cauſed one of the fineſt provinces of the kingdom to be

* See in the Collection of Norman Hiſtorians, compiled by Duhene, the relation of an ancient anonymous Author: See alſo that of Dudon de St. Quentin, and other ancient writers.

be ceded to them. They often carried their arms into Spain, and even made themſelves dreaded in Italy and Greece. In fine, they no leſs infeſted the North than the South with their incurſions, ſpreading every where deſolation and terror: ſometimes as furiouſly bent on their own mutual deſtruction, as on the ruin of other nations; ſometimes animated by a more pacific ſpirit, they tranſported colonies to unknown or uninhabited countries, as if they were willing to repair in one place the horrid deſtruction of the human kind occaſioned by their furious ravages in others.

A people, who are ignorant of manual arts and traffic, of juſtice, and of all means of providing for their own ſecurity or ſubſiſtence except by war, never fail to betake themſelves to piracy, if they inhabit a country ſurrounded by the ſea. The Pelaſgi or firſt Greeks were generally pirates and robbers. "Some of them," ſays Thucidides *, "attacked unfortified cities; others, ſuch as the Carians and Cretans, who dwelt along the coaſts, fitted out fleets to ſcour the ſeas." But whereas the Greeks are repreſented to us as pirates in the firſt periods of their hiſtory, it is to be obſerved, that the Scandinavians did not become ſo till late. Sidonius Apollinarius, a writer of the fifth century, is, I think, the firſt who mentions the piracy of the Northern nations. He attributes this practice to the Saxons, of whom he draws

* See Thucid. lib. i. cap. 5.

draws a frightful picture *. The Danes and Norwegians had not as yet ventured far from their coasts. I imagine that their nearest neighbours had not allurements sufficient to tempt them. The inhabitants of those countries, as poor and warlike as themselves, were likely to return them blow for blow. Britain and Gaul were too distant, and too well defended to become the first attempt of the Scandinavian ravagers. They began then by arming a few vessels, with which they plundered the states nearest to them, and overpowered such few merchant-ships as traversed the Baltic. Insensibly enriched by their success in little enterprizes, and encouraged to attempt greater, they were at length in a condition to become formidable to distant nations, such as the Anglo-Saxons, the French, or the Flemings, who all of them possessed wealth enough to tempt free-booters, and lived under a government too defective and weak to repel them. From that time all this people conceived an amazing fondness for maritime expeditions, and towards the beginning of the ninth century, we find these adventurers vastly increased, who, by a strange association of ideas, imagined they acquired eternal glory, by committing every where, without any pretext, the most horrible violence.

In

* *Est Saxonibus piratis cum discriminibus pelagi non notitia solum sed familiaritas. . . . . Hostis omni hoste truculentior ; improvisus aggreditur, prævisus elabitur, spernit objectos, sternit incautos.* Sidon. Apollin. lib. viii. epist. 6.

In proportion as the divisions, incapacity and imprudence of Charlemagne's successors weakened their governments, the Scandinavians, encouraged by their growing wealth, constantly fitted out still more numerous fleets. " The French monarchy," says an author of that age *, " labouring under the weight of a " bad interior policy, hath been obliged to leave the " seas exposed to the barbarous fury of the Nor- " mans." The mal-administration of the Saxon kings of England produced the same effect in that island, now so respectable for its naval power. Both the one and the other had the dangerous imprudence to purchase peace from these pirates; which was not only putting arms into the hands of the enemy, but was also attended with this further inconvenience, that the commanders in these expeditions, who had no authority over each other, only considered themselves as bound by their own separate engagements; so that those harrassed nations were no sooner freed, by dint of money, from one set of ravagers, than another

* Auctor Vitæ Sti. Genulfi, lib. xi.——

The Scandinavians had already, before the time of Charlemagne, found their way into the neighbouring seas: but this prince having had the precaution to station ships of war at the mouths of all the great rivers throughout his empire, and to cause an exact discipline to be observed along the coasts, they were obliged to keep within the limits he prescribed them so long as he reigned, which was from A. D. 768, to 814. But they quickly found under his feeble successors that they might scour the seas with the same impunity, they had done before his time. *First Edit.*

ther ſucceeded, ready to attack them with the ſame impetuoſity, if they were not appeaſed by the ſame means. The better to account for that ſtrange facility with which the Scandinavians ſo long plundered, and ſo frequently conquered the Anglo-Saxons and the French, we muſt remark, that their cruelty, which gave no quarter, and which occaſioned thoſe ſad lamentations ſo well known *, had impreſſed theſe nations with ſuch terror, that they were half vanquiſhed at their very appearance. Beſides, there was no contending with an enemy who did not make war, like regular forces, on any direct and conſiſtent plan, but by ſudden eruptions in a hundred places at once, as expeditious in retreating to their ſhips where they met with reſiſtance, as in darting down upon the coaſts where they found them quiet and defenceleſs. It is, nevertheleſs, probable, that a wiſe and well-ordered government might have remedied all theſe evils: and in fact that it did ſo, we have an inconteſtible proof in the conduct of the great ALFRED, under whoſe reign the Danes were obliged to leave England unmoleſted. But what appears an eaſy matter to us, at this time, required in thoſe ages of ignorance and confuſion,

* The Monks inſerted it as a petition in the Litany, *A furore Normannorum, libera nos, Domine.*— The French called theſe adventurers in general NORMANS, i. e. Northern-men: which afterwards became the proper name of the colony that ſettled in Neuſtria; whoſe hiſtory is given below. T.

confuſion, the uncommon genius of an Alfred to accompliſh.

If we reflect on the interior ſtate of Scandinavia, during the times that its inhabitants were ſo unfortunately famous, we ſhall ſoon ſee the cauſe of that amazing exterior power which they poſſeſſed. I have before obſerved, that they neglected agriculture, which, among a thouſand other good effects, extinguiſhes in a riſing people the reliſh for ſavage life, and inſpires them with the love of peace and juſtice, without which the cultivation of their lands is uſeleſs. Their flocks being almoſt their only ſubſiſtence, they were neither obliged to a conſtant abode on the ſame ſpot, nor to wait for the time of harveſt, and conſequently ſuch a people, though in fact but few, were able, on ſhort notice, to levy numerous armies. Moſt of them brought up in a maritime country, and inured to the ſea from their childhood, had no fear of the dangers, or rather knew not that there were dangers of any kind attending ſuch a life. What a boundleſs field for conqueſts was here opened by the ſole advantage of navigation! What a free ſcope was here afforded a warlike people to ſpread univerſally the terror of their arms! The profeſſion of piracy was ſo far from appearing diſgraceful to them, that it was in their eyes the certain road to honours and to fortune: for it was wiſely contrived that the word HONOUR, to which ſo many different ideas are annexed, was among them ſolely confined to a diſregard of dangers. Hence it is, that in the ancient chronicles, more than one

one hero boafts of being the moft renowned pirate in the North; and that often the fons of the great lords and kings made cruizing voyages in their youth, in order to render themfelves illuftrious, and to become one day worthy of command. This is what we fee happen very frequently after Harold Harfagre had once made himfelf mafter of all Norway, which before his time was divided into feveral petty kingdoms. Many princes, dukes or earls, feeing themfelves thus ftripped of their poffeffions, retired into Iceland, the Orkneys, the ifles of Faro and Shetland, and thence covering the fea with their veffels, infefted all the coafts of Scandinavia; where for many ages there was no failing with any fafety. Adam of Bremen, who travelled through Denmark fome time after Chriftianity was received there, gives a very affecting defcription of the defolations they made in that kingdom *. Nor were they in reality lefs formidable in the North, than to France or England. The coafts of Denmark, Sweden and Norway were obliged to be under conftant guard. They encreafed fo much, that on fome occafions, and particularly under king Regner Lodbrog, the Danes were perhaps more numerous on fea than on land: fo that the whole nation, according to the account of an ancient hiftorian, wore nothing but the habits of failors, that they might be ready to embark on the firft fignal †.

As

* Vid. Adam Brem. de fitu Dan. paffim.

† Arnold. Lubeck. Chronic.

As ſoon as a prince had attained his eighteenth or twentieth year, he commonly requeſted of his father a ſmall fleet completely fitted out, in order to atchieve with his followers ſome adventure that might be productive of glory and ſpoil. The father applauded ſuch an inclination in his ſon, as indicating a riſing courage and heroic mind. He gave him ſhips, the commander and crew of which mutually engaged not to return, unleſs adorned with laurels, and loaded with plunder. That nation became the firſt object of their reſentment, from whom they had received any injury; and frequently their principal aim was to make reprizals on ſome province which ſerved for the retreat of other corſairs. If the fleets of two different nations met by chance in their voyage, this was alſo an occaſion of fighting which they never neglected.

The vanquiſhed party was commonly put to death, though ſometimes the conquerors were contented to make them ſlaves; and often, by a ſingular ſtrain of generoſity, which the love of glory was able to produce in minds in other reſpects ſo ferocious, if the enemy that fell in their way had fewer ſhips than themſelves, they ſet aſide part of their own veſſels, that ſo, engaging upon equal terms, the victory might not be attributed to ſuperiority of numbers *. Many of them alſo regarded it as diſhonourable to ſurprize the

* So it happened in an engagement between two heroes, who are mentioned in an old Icelandic chronicle called Torſtein Wikings Saga.

the enemy by night. Sometimes the chiefs thought it beſt to decide the diſpute by ſingle combat; in this caſe they landed on the neareſt ſhore: if one of them happened to be diſarmed or thrown down, he frequently refuſed to receive quarter, and was killed on the ſpot: but if he had defended himſelf gallantly, the victor granted him his life, demanded his friendſhip, adopted him for a kind of Foſter-brother *, and they mutually ſwore to preſerve an eternal friendſhip. In token of this alliance, the two heroes made inciſions in their hands or arms, and beſmeared their weapons with the blood, or mixing it in a cup, each of them covering their heads with a ſod, drank of it, ſwearing that the death of the firſt of them who fell in battle ſhould not paſs unrevenged. Many of theſe piratical princes, whom ſucceſs and cuſtom had attached and habituated to this profeſſion, never quitted it, but gloried in paſſing the remainder of their lives on board their ſhips. We meet with them ſometimes, in their ancient hiſtories, boaſting that they never repoſed under an immoveable roof, nor drank BEER in peace by their fire-ſide †.

The veſſels of theſe corſairs were always well provided with offenſive arms, ſuch as ſtones, arrows, cables, with which they overſet ſmall veſſels, and grappling irons to board them, &c. Every individual was ſkilful in ſwimming; and as their engagements were

 ſeldom

* Foſter-Broder, *Danicè*.

† Dalin. Suc. Rik. hiſt. tom. i. c. 4. §. 8.

ſeldom far diſtant from the ſhore, the vanquiſhed party often ſaved themſelves by ſwimming to land. Each band had its own peculiar ſtations, ports, places of rendezvous, and magazines: and many cities in the North owe their preſent proſperity to the advantage they had of affording them retreats. Such was Lunden in Scania, which, according to Adam of Bremen*, contained great riches laid up there by the pirates: and for a long time the kings themſelves countenanced and ſhared their plunder, by ſelling them the liberty of retiring into their harbours.

The manner in which the lands were parcelled out in Denmark and Norway evidently ſhews, that every thing there was directed towards this one end of having a powerful maritime force. Each diviſion, whether more or leſs conſiderable, derived its name from the number of veſſels it was capable of fitting out, and theſe names ſtill ſubſiſt in ſome places. In the hiſtory of Denmark may be ſeen the particular taxes impoſed on each province for that purpoſe, and the number of ſhips of which their fleets were compoſed. At firſt they were inconſiderable; but in proportion as the chiefs who followed this piratical profeſſion were enriched by it, the northern ſeas were ſeen covered with one or two hundred veſſels or ſtill more numerous ſquadrons. We read in hiſtory of a fleet of ſeven hundred ſhips, commanded by Harold Blaatand king of Denmark, and a Norwegian lord named

* Vid. Adam Brem. de ſit. Dan. cap. ccxiii.

ed Count HACON. This number is no greater than what we often find in the fleets under the following reigns; and befides it is certain, that the veffels of which it confifted, were but fmall. The firft we hear of were only a kind of twelve-oared barks; they were afterwards built capable of containing one hundred or a hundred and twenty men, and thefe were very common in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The northern kings alfo fometimes conftructed veffels of an extraordinary fize, but thefe were rather for fhew than defence. Such was that of Harold Harfagre: a long fhip which the chronicles mention with admiration, under the name of the DRAGON. King Olave Tryggueſon had one of the fame kind, named the LONG SERPENT: the chronicles fay it was very long, large and high, and of a moft durable conftruction; a wooden ferpent was carved on its poop, and both that and its prow were gilded. It carried thirty-four banks of rowers, and was, they add, the fineft and largeft fhip that had been ever feen in Norway *.

Thefe piratical expeditions were not always confined to the devaftation of fome province, or to a few naval engagements; events which producing no farther confequence than the immediate misfortune of the

* See a Differtation of Baron Holberg's, inferted in the 3d tome of Memoirs of the Society of Sciences in Denmark, intitled "Danmark's "og Norges Soe Hiftoire:" See alfo Torfæus's hift. of Norway in the Life of HAROLD and of OLAVE, &c. *Firft Edit.*

the people who then ſuffered by them, were ſoon forgotten by poſterity. I ſhould digreſs from the purpoſe of this introduction, were I to relate all the conqueſts made by the inhabitants of the North in their cruizing voyages. I will only take notice of the emigration of the ANGLES, who along with the SAXONS, invaded Britain in the fifth century, and gave it their name. As for the reſt, I ſhall only borrow from the old chronicles ſome facts and relations little known to ſtrangers, but which will afford the beſt idea of the maritime power of theſe ancient Scandinavians, formerly dreaded by ſo many nations.

It is well known, that the Britons, unable to defend themſelves from the northern inhabitants of their iſle, ſought for aſſiſtance from the Danes and Saxons, their allies. The ancient Saxon chronicle, publiſhed by Gibſon *, informs us, that thoſe people who went over and ſettled in Britain, were originally of three different countries. One party of them were the ancient SAXONS, that is to ſay, the people of Lower Saxony; another were the ANGLES or Engliſh, who inhabited that part of the Duchy of Sleſwic in the neighbourhood of Flenſbourg, ſtill called Angelen, and were conſequently Danes. Laſtly, there paſſed over into Britain alſo a conſiderable number of JUTES, which is the name given at this day to the inhabitants of Jutland. The Saxons occupied the provinces named

* Chronic. Saxon. p. 12. et ſeq.

named, after them, ESSEX, WESTSEX *, SUSSEX, and MIDDLESEX. "The ANGLES," continues the author of that chronicle, "left their own country totally "deserted †, and so it still continues. This country "is situated between Saxony and Jutland. Their "leaders were Hengist and Horsa, who deduced their "pedigree from Odin, as do all our kings. From "the Angles descended all the inhabitants of the east "and southern parts of England, as well as those of Mercia

* WESTSEX, or the West-Saxon kingdom contained Hampshire, Berks, Wilts, Somerset, Dorset, &c. T.

† We shall not wonder at this, if we recollect that they did not so much conquer the BRITONS, as extirpate and expel them, and that they entirely new-peopled three-fourths of this large island. That the Saxons suffered few or none of the old inhabitants to remain among them, appears from their adopting scarce any of their customs, laws, or language: hardly retaining so much as their names of places. All which they would insensibly have done more or less had the conquered Britons remained among them, though in the lowest state of servitude. For it is always seen that the conquerors gradually assume the language and manners of the conquered, where the latter are most numerous, though never so much depressed, provided they intermix with them. Thus the Norwegians, under ROLLO, when they had conquered Normandy, quickly imbibed the French manners and language: Thus the same Normans, when about two centuries after they conquered England, in vain endeavoured to make their Norman-French the national language, and to establish the Norman laws; in the course of one or two reigns, the laws, manners, and speech of the English had gradually recovered the superiority, and were adopted by the conquerors themselves and their descendants. T.

" Mercia * and Northumberland. The Jutes or Jut-
" landers poſſeſſed only Kent and the iſle of Wight."
Thus although this people were not yet known by the name of Danes, it is evident, that at leaſt two thirds of the conquerors of Great Britain came from Denmark: ſo that when the Danes again infeſted England about three or four hundred years after, and finally conquered it toward the latter end of the tenth century, they waged war with the deſcendants of their own anceſtors.

A particular event ſerved to rekindle that ſpirit of rapine and conqueſt which had already been ſo fatal to this iſland. Harold Harfagre having (as I ſaid above) compleated the conqueſt of Norway about the year 870, and being deſirous of procuring that repoſe for ſuch of his ſubjects as dwelt along the coaſts, which they themſelves would not grant to their neighbours, prohibited all pirates of Norway, under the ſevereſt penalties, from exerciſing any hoſtilities againſt their own country †. But notwithſtanding this prohibition, a Norwegian Duke ‡, named ROLF or ROLLO, ſprung, as it is ſaid, from the ancient kings of Norway,

* MERCIA, or (as the old Engliſh name was) MERCH-LAND contained 17 counties, viz. Oxford, Glouceſter, Salop, Cheſhire, &c. It was called Merch-land, becauſe it was every way bounded by MARCHES, or lands bordering on other kingdoms: It no where verged on the ſea. T.

† Torfæi hiſt. Norveg. tom. II. lib. II. Ejuſd. Diſſertat. de Gaungo Rolfo. p. 80.

‡ Called in their own language JARL, a title of the ſame original and import, as our Anglo-Saxon EARL. T.

Norway, made a defcent on the province of Viken, nor retired thence till laden with a great booty of cattle. Harold, who was in the neighbourhood, was enraged at Rollo to the laft degree, for thus daring to difobey him almoft in his very prefence, and inftantly condemned him to perpetual banifhment from Norway. In vain the mother of this unfortunate youth threw herfelf at the king's feet, imploring pardon for her fon, and chanting, according to the cuftom of thofe times, thefe verfes, which the chronicles have preferved to us: "Is the very name of our race become "hateful to you? You drive from his country one "of the greateft men it has ever produced, the ho-"nour of the Norwegian nobility. Ah! why will "you provoke the wolf to devour the flocks, who "wander defencelefs through the woods? Fear, left "becoming outrageous, he fhould one day occafion "great misfortunes." The king remained inflexible, and Rollo perceiving that he was for ever cut off from all hopes of return to his own country, retired with his fleet among the iflands of the Hebrides to the north-weft of Scotland, whither the flower of the Norwegian nobility had fled for refuge ever fince Harold had become mafter of the whole kingdom. He was there received with open arms by thofe warriors, who, eager for conqueft and revenge, waited only for a chief to undertake fome glorious enterprize. Rollo fetting himfelf at their head, and feeing his power formidable, failed towards England, which had been long as it were a field open on all fides to the violen-

ces

ces of the northern nations. But the great Alfred had ſome years before eſtabliſhed ſuch order in his part of the iſland, that Rollo, after ſeveral fruitleſs attempts, deſpaired of forming there ſuch a ſettlement as ſhould make him amends for the loſs of his own country. He pretended therefore to have had a ſupernatural dream, which promiſed him a glorious fortune in France, and which ſerved at leaſt to ſupport the ardour of his followers. The weakneſs of the government in that kingdom, and the confuſion in which it was involved, were ſtill more perſuaſive reaſons to aſſure them of ſucceſs. Having therefore ſailed up the Seine to Rouen, he immediately took that capital of the province, then called NEUSTRIA, and making it his magazine of arms, he advanced up to Paris, to which he laid ſiege in form. The events of this war properly belong to the hiſtory of France, and all the world knows, that it at length ended in the entire ceſſion of Neuſtria, which Charles the Simple was obliged to give up to Rollo and his Normans, in order to purchaſe a peace. Rollo received it in perpetuity to himſelf and his poſterity, as a feudal duchy dependant on the crown of France *. A deſcription of

* This famous treaty was concluded at S. Clair, A. D. 912, by which K. Charles agreed to give his daughter Giſele in marriage to Rollo, together with that part of Neuſtria, ſince called Normandy, upon condition that he would do homage for it, and would embrace the Chriſtian religion. (Vid. Abregé Chronologique de l'hiſt de France, par M. Henault.) T.

of the interview between Charles and this new duke, gives us a curious picture of the manners of these NORMANS, (as they were called by foreigners :) for the latter would not take the oath of fealty to his sovereign lord, any other way than by placing his hands within those of the king; and absolutely refused to kiss his feet, as custom then required. It was with great difficulty he was prevailed on to let one of his warriors perform this ceremony in his stead; but the officer to whom Rollo deputed this service, suddenly raised the king's foot so high, that he overturned him on his back; a piece of rudeness which was only laughed at; to such a degree were the Normans feared, and Charles despised *.

Soon after, Rollo was persuaded to embrace Christianity, and he was baptized with much ceremony by the archbishop of Rouen in the cathedral of that city. As soon as he saw himself in full possession of Normandy, he exhibited such virtues as rendered the province happy, and deserved to make his former outrages forgotten. Religious, wise, and liberal, this captain of pirates became, after Alfred, the greatest and most humane prince of his time. Far from treating Normandy as a conquered province, his whole attention was employed to re-establish it. This country was, by the frequent devastations of the Scandinavians, rendered so desert and uncultivated, that Rollo could not at first reside in it; but Charles was

 obliged

* Wilhelm. Gemmet. lib. ii. c. 11.

obliged to yield up Britanny to him for a while, till Normandy was in a condition to furnish subsistence to its new masters. Nevertheless, the fertility of the soil, seconding the industry of the people, it became, in a few years, one of the finest provinces of Europe. Thus it was that this prince, afterwards known under the name of ROLLO or RAOUL I. secured to his children this noble possession, which they, two hundred years afterwards, augmented by the conquest of England: as if it were destined that this island should at all times receive its sovereigns from among the northern nations. As to the French historians, they agree with the Icelandic chronicles, in describing Rollo as a man of uncommon wisdom and capacity; generous, eloquent, indefatigable, intrepid, of a noble figure, and majestic size. Many other Scandinavian princes and captains are drawn in the same colours. Such were Harold Harfagre, Olave Tryggueson, Magnus king of Norway, Canute the Great, &c. men born with truly heroic qualities, which they alas! degraded by injustice and inhumanity: but who wanted only another age and another education to render them most accomplished persons.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XI.

Sequel of the maritime expeditions of the ancient Danes and Norwegians. The Discovery of Iceland and Greenland, and of an unknown country, called Vinland.

IT was not by this expedition alone, important as it might be, that the Norwegians were diſtinguiſhed under the reign of HAROLD HARFAGRE. The ambition of that prince gave birth to a conqueſt of a more peaceable kind, which though little known to the reſt of the world, had yet very intereſting conſequences in the hiſtory of the North. For, not ſatisfied with having happily ſubdued the little tyrants who had for a long time weakened and diſtreſt Norway,

way, he was diſpoſed to exerciſe ſuch abſolute authority over his ſubjects, as, far from ſubmitting to, they had not even a name for it. The greateſt part of the Norwegian nobility perceiving that it was in vain to oppoſe their ſtrength to his, determined to abandon a country, where they were obliged to live depreſſed, impoveriſhed and obſcure. Ingulph was one of the firſt who went into this voluntary exile. It is, indeed, ſaid, that the apprehenſion of being puniſhed for a murder he had committed, was, equally with the tyranny of Harold, a motive for his flight; but this latter inducement was certainly what engaged a multitude of noble families of Norway to join him *. Theſe illuſtrious fugitives being embarked, Ingulph, whom they had choſen for their leader, conducted them, in the year 874, to Iceland, which muſt certainly have been long before known to a people who were ſuch expert ſailors, though they had never yet thought of ſending colonies thither. As ſoon as they diſcovered it at a diſtance, Ingulph, according to an ancient and ſuperſtitious cuſtom, threw a wooden door into the ſea, determining to land where the Gods ſhould ſeem to point out, by the direction of this floating guide; but the waves carrying it out of ſight, after a fruitleſs ſearch, they were obliged to diſembark in a gulph toward the ſouth part of the iſland, which ſtill bears Ingulph's name. Hiorleif, his brother-in-law ſettled in another part. They both found the

* Arngrim. Jon. Crymogæa, ſive de reb. Iſland. lib. iii. Hamb. 1593.

the iſland uninhabited and uncultivated, but covered with thick foreſts of birch-trees, through which they could not penetrate, but by cutting their way before them. There are now no foreſts in Iceland, nor any birch-trees, except here and there a few ſhort and ſlender ſhrubs: but the trees that are ſtill found deep buried in the earth, and frequently among the rocks, ſhould prevent our too haſtily rejecting the evidence of the ancient chronicles, when they deſcribe the country as different from what it is at preſent *. The Norwegian adventurers imagined that this iſland had been formerly inhabited, or at leaſt that people had landed on the ſhore, as Ingulph found there wooden croſſes, and other little pieces of workmanſhip, after the manner of the Iriſh and Britons. Theſe people had embraced Chriſtianity before that time, and very poſſibly ſome of their fiſhermen thrown upon the coaſts, might have left a few of their effects behind them. On this ſuppoſition, that Iceland had not been inhabited

* Vid. ARNGRIM. JON. Crymogæa. lib. i. c. 2. p. 21.—TORFAEUS remarks the ſame thing. "Should any one object, (ſays he) "that modern Iceland does not "anſwer the ancient deſcriptions "of it, it may be juſtly anſwered, "that this country has greatly de-"generated. This I can affirm, "from what I have been an eye-"witneſs of myſelf: I have ſeen "in my youth great alterations "in the face of this country; "ſhores ſwallowed, and others "thrown up by the violence of "the waves; meadows formerly "fruitful, now buried under vaſt "heaps of ſand; plains all cover-"ed, and vallies filled up with "ſtones and ſand brought down "by the torrents of melted ſnow," &c. Vide Torfæi hiſt. Norveg. tom. i. c. 5. p 12.

inhabited before the ninth century, it could not poſſibly be the THULE of which the ancients ſpeak ſo often; and what Procopius and others have written of it, ſeems rather applicable to the northern provinces of Scandinavia *.

The ſucceſs of Ingulph's expedition being much talked of in Norway, other families were eager to fly to this place of refuge from the ambitious encroachments of their king. The Icelandic annals are very exact in relating the names of theſe adventurers, the ſeveral numbers of which they conſiſted, together with the names of the places where they ſettled, which, for the moſt part, are ſtill retained. All the other circumſtances of theſe voyages are handed down with equal preciſion, and we may confidently aſſert, that the ancient hiſtory of Iceland is more compleat than that of any other country in Europe. The ſeveral particulars, and the ſequel of the event are foreign to this work; we need only obſerve, that this Icelandic colony carried with them a violent hatred for arbitrary power, and bravely preſerved their liberty and independence againſt every attempt to deprive them of thoſe bleſſings. This was endeavoured by

* All that can, with any certainty, be ſaid of this *Ultima Thule* of the ancients, is, that they called by that name the fartheſt country which they could diſcover to the North; or in general ſome very northern country. Indeed it appears, that they applied this name at different times to the isles of Shetland, Faro, the Orkneys, Norway, Iceland, Lapland, &c.

by ſeveral Norwegian princes in vain; ſo that it was full four hundred years before this republic became ſubject to Norway, along with which it was afterwards united to the crown of Denmark.

About a century after the diſcovery of Iceland, a Norwegian nobleman, called TORWALD, having been exiled for killing a perſon in a duel, retired thither, along with his ſon ERIC, ſurnamed RUFUS, or the RED *. Torwald dying there, his ſon was ſoon after, for a ſimilar accident, obliged to withdraw from this iſland. Not knowing where to fly for refuge, neceſſity determined him to attempt the diſcovery of a coaſt, to the north of Iceland, which had been before deſcried by a Norwegian voyager. His ſearch proved ſucceſsful, and he landed there in the year 982. He ſettled at firſt on a little iſland that formed a ſtrait, which he called, after his own name, ERIC-SUND, and there paſſed the winter. In the ſpring he went to ſurvey the main-land, and finding it covered with a pleaſing verdure, gave it the name it ſtill bears, of GROENLAND or GREENLAND †. After living there ſome

* Vid. Torfæi Groenland. Antiq. deſcript. Haun. 1708.

† GROENLAND is, in the northern languages, exactly equivalent to our Engliſh word GREENLAND. An old Icelandic hiſtorian tells us, that ERIC gave the country this alluring name, in order to captivate and invite the northern people to come and ſettle there. (*Vid. Arii Polyhiſt. libellus de Is-landia, c. 6. p.* 33.) The name, however, was not altogether without foundation; for though Greenland is in the inner parts a high mountainous country, covered perpetually

ſome years, he returned to Iceland, and prevailed on ſeveral perſons to go and ſettle in this new country. He deſcribed it as a land abounding in excellent paſturage, in furs and game, having a coaſt well ſupplied with fiſh. Returning back with his Icelanders, he applied himſelf to render this infant colony flouriſhing and proſperous.

Some years after, LEIF, the ſon of ERIC, having made a voyage to Norway, met with a favourable reception from king Olave Tryggueſon, to whom he painted out Greenland in the moſt advantageous colours. Olave, newly become a convert to Chriſtianity, was animated with the warmeſt zeal to propagate through the North the religion he had embraced. He detained Leif therefore at his court during the winter, and was ſo good an advocate for the Chriſtian doctrines, that he perſuaded his gueſt to be baptized. In the ſpring he ſent him to Greenland, attended by a prieſt, who was to confirm him in his faith, and endeavour to get it received into the new colony. Eric was at firſt offended at his ſon's deſerting the religion of his anceſtors, but was at length appeaſed; and the miſſionary, with the aſſiſtance of Leif, ſoon brought over the whole ſettlement to the knowledge of the true

ally with ice and ſnow; yet on the ſea-coaſts, and in the bays and inlets are found very good meadows and paſtures; or at leaſt what might be deemed ſuch by natives of Iceland and Norway. See EGEDE's Natural Hiſtory of Greenland. Lond. 1745. p. 4, 12, 44, &c. T.

true God. Before the end of the tenth century, there were churches in Greenland, and a biſhoprick had been erected in the new town of GARDE, the capital of the country, whither the Norwegians traded for many years. The Greenlanders ſoon after encreaſing, founded another little town called ALBE, and a monaſtery dedicated to St. Thomas. Arngrim Jonas has preſerved a liſt of the biſhops of Garde: they were ſuffragans to the archbiſhop of Drontheim. The Greenlanders acknowledged the kings of Norway for their ſovereigns, and paid them an annual tribute, from which they in vain endeavoured to free themſelves in the year 1261. This colony ſubſiſted till about the year 1348, which was the æra of a dreadful peſtilence, known by the name of the BLACK DEATH, that made terrible devaſtation in the North. From that time *, both the colony at Garde and that

* Though the peſtilence abovementioned might contribute to the ruin of the colony, and to cut off its intercourſe with Norway; yet EGEDE aſſures us, that it ſtill ſubſiſted and maintained ſome correſpondence with the mother-country until the year 1406, when the laſt biſhop was ſent over to Greenland. The ſame author attributes the neglect and loſs of that ancient colony to the diſturbances in the North, occaſioned partly by change and tranſlation of the government in queen Margaret's reign (about the beginning of the 15th century) and partly by the continual wars, that followed between the Swedes and Danes, which cauſed the navigation to thoſe parts to be laid aſide: to which a natural cauſe has alſo probably contributed, viz. that the ſeas on the eaſtern coaſt, which were formery open, are now cloſed up with almoſt perpetual ſhoals of

at Albe, with all the other Norwegian ſettlements on the eaſtern coaſt of Greenland, having been ſo totally forgotten and neglected, that we are utterly ignorant what became of them. All the endeavours which have been uſed ſince, have only tended to the diſcovery of the weſtern ſhore, where in the preſent age the Danes have made four new ſettlements. The Icelandic chronicles unanimouſly atteſt, that the ancient Norwegians eſtabliſhed a colony alſo on the weſtern coaſt; but as no remains of it are now extant, many people ſuſpected the veracity of thoſe hiſtorians on this head, and conſequently on many others. At length they have recovered all the authority they were in danger of loſing. It is not long ſince the Daniſh miſſionaries diſcovered along this coaſt the ruins of large ſtone houſes, of churches built in the form of a croſs, and fragments of broken bells; they have alſo diſcovered that the ſavage inhabitants of the country have preſerved a diſtinct remembrance of thoſe ancient Norwegians, of the places where they dwelt, their cuſtoms, the quarrels their anceſtors had with them, and of the war which ended in the deſtruction of thoſe ſtrangers *.

We

of ice, ſo as to render it inacceſſible. EGEDE, however, offers proofs that the old colony is not wholly extinct, and even propoſes means of getting to them. See his Hiſt. of Greenland, chap. ii. &c. T.

* See EGEDE's deſcription of Greenland, p. 6. and particularly the whole 2d chapter.—The ſame author tells us, that in the language of the native Greenlanders are found at this day many Norwegian words. See ch. xvii. p. 163.

We ought not, after this, to doubt what the ſame chronicles tell us concerning other colonies, founded at the ſame time, and particularly thoſe in the eaſtern part of Greenland. The diſcovery of ſuch an ancient ſettlement cannot fail of being a juſt object of curioſity. It is true indeed, that ſeveral unſucceſsful attempts were made towards it in the laſt age; but were they ſo well directed, as to bar all future hopes? The moſt intelligent perſons are of opinion, that they were not. We may therefore expect that an attentive government will ere long ſurmount all the obſtacles which have hitherto oppoſed ſo intereſting a diſcovery.

The Scandinavians, now maſters of the northern ocean, and fluſhed with ſucceſs, became poſſeſſed, at different times, of all the iſlands in thoſe ſeas. Thus, while the Danes were reducing England, the Norwegians conquered a conſiderable part of Scotland, and peopled the Orkneys, the Hebrides, the iſlands of Faro and Shetland; in moſt of which the Norwegian language is ſpoken to this day. Towards the end of the eleventh century, Magnus, the ſon of Olave, one of their princes, filled that part of the world with the renown of his arms. Ordericus Vitalis, whoſe acknowledged veracity in the hiſtories of France and England, may ſerve to eſtabliſh that of our old Icelandic chronicles, with which he perfectly agrees, relates, that "in the fifth year of the reign of William "Rufus, king of England *, Magnus king of Norway "viſited

* This was in the year 1092. Vid. Orderic. Vital. Hiſt. eccleſ. lib. x.

" visited the Orkneys, and made a tour through part
" of Scotland, and all the islands in those seas that be-
" longed to him, as far as Anglesey. He settled co-
" lonies in the Isle of Man, which was then a desart,
" commanded them to build houses, and took care
" they should be provided with necessaries of every
" kind. He afterwards made a progress through se-
" veral other islands in the great ocean, which are,
" in a manner, beyond the limits of the world; and,
" exerting his royal authority, obliged several people
" to go and inhabit them. With the same earnest-
" ness did this prince apply himself for many years to
" increase his subjects, and enlarge his empire." But if in an age when ignorance overspread the whole face of Europe; when the aim of governments was little more than self-defence; and when rapine and bloodshed composed the most memorable events of history; if we are surprized to find, in such an age, colonies founded, and unknown regions explored, by a people who are considered as farther removed than other nations from civility and science; how will our surprize be encreased when we find them opening a way into that new world, which many ages after occasioned such a change among us, and reflected so much glory on its discoverers. Strange as this may appear, the fact becomes indisputable, when we consider that the best authenticated Icelandic chronicles unanimously affirm it, that their relations contain nothing that can admit of doubt, and that they are supported by several concurrent testimonies. This is an event too in-

teresting

tereſting, and too little known, not to require a circumſtantial detail. I ſhall proceed then, without any previous reflections, to relate the principal circumſtances, as I find them in the Treatiſe of Ancient Vinland, written by Torfæus; and in the hiſtory of Greenland by Jonas Arngrim: two Icelandic authors of undoubted credit, who have faithfully copied the old hiſtorians of their own country *.

There was, ſay thoſe ancient chronicles, an Icelander, named HERIOL, who along with his ſon BIARN, made every year a trading voyage to different countries, and generally wintered in Norway. Happening one time to be ſeparated from each other, the ſon ſteered his courſe for Norway, where he ſuppoſed he ſhould meet with his father; but on his arrival there, found he was gone to Greenland, a country but lately diſcovered, and little known to the Norwegians. Biarn determined, at all events, to follow his father, and ſet ſail for Greenland; although, ſays Arngrim, " he

* This little treatiſe of Torfæus appeared in the year 1705, under the title of "*Hiſtoria Vinlandiæ* "*antiquæ, ſeu pars Americæ Sep*"*tentrionalis, ubi nominis ratio re*"*cenſetur, &c. ex antiquit. Iſlandi*"*cis eruta.*" Arngrim's Hiſtory of Greenland came out more than one hundred years before, but he only occaſionally mentioned this diſcovery in the 9th and 10th chapters. The Icelandic manuſcripts that ſpeak of it are numerous; the principal are the *Codex Flateyenſis*, *Hiemskringla*, *Landnama Saga*, or "Book on the origin of "countries;" and poſſibly others that are now loſt, but of which many extracts remain in the collection of a learned Icelander named BIORN DE SKARDZA.

" he had no-body on board who could direct him in
" the voyage, nor any particular inftructions to guide
" him ; fo great was the courage of the ancients !
" He fteered by the obfervation of the ftars, and by
" what he had heard of the fituation of the country
" he was in queft of." During the firft three days, he bore towards the weft, but the wind varying to the north, and blowing ftrong, he was forced to run to the fouthward. The wind ceafing in about twenty-four hours, they difcovered land at a diftance, which as they approached they perceived to be flat and low, and covered with wood ; for which reafon he would not go on fhore, as being convinced it could not be Greenland, which had been reprefented to him as diftinguifhable at a great diftance for its mountains covered with fnow. They then failed away towards the North-weft, and were aware of a road which formed an ifland, but did not ftop there. After fome days they arrived in Greenland, where Biarn met with his father.

The following fummer, viz. in the year 1002, Biarn made another voyage to Norway, where, to one of the principal lords of the country, named count Eric, he mentioned the difcovery he had made of fome unknown iflands. The count blamed his want of curiofity, and ftrongly preffed him to proceed on with his difcovery. In confequence of this advice, Biarn, as foon as he was returned to Greenland to his father, began to think ferioufly of exploring thofe lands with more attention. Leif, the fon of that fame Eric Rufus,

fus who had discovered Greenland, and who was still chief of the colony he had settled there; this Leif, I say, being desirous of rendering himself illustrious like his father, formed the design of going thither himself; and prevailing on his father Eric to accompany him, they fitted out a vessel with five and thirty hands; but when the old man was setting out on horseback to go to the ship, his horse happened to fall down under him; an accident which he considered as an admonition from heaven to desist from the enterprize; and therefore returning home, the less-superstitious Leif set sail without him.

He soon descried one of the coasts which Biarn had before seen, that lay nearest to Greenland. He cast anchor and went on shore, but found only a flat rocky shore without any kind of verdure; he therefore immediately quitted it, after having first given it the name of HELLELAND, or the "Flat Country *." A short navigation brought him to another place, which Biarn had also noted. In this land, which lay very low, they saw nothing but a few scattered thickets, and white sand. This he called MARK-LAND, or the "Level country †." Two days prosperous sailing

* *Pays plat*, says the French original. But HELLELAND should rather be rendered "Stonyland:" for *Hella* signifies a Stone or Rock, in the Northern languages; which our French author seems to have been but slightly acquainted with. T.

† *Pays du plaine*, says our author.—But MARKLAND rather signifies "Woody-land:" from *Mark (sylva, tesqua)* a Wood, or Rough Thicket. T.

ing brought them to a third ſhore, which was ſhelter-ed to the north by an iſland. They diſembarked there in very fine weather, and found plants which produced a grain as ſweet as honey. Leaving this, they failed weſtward, in ſearch of ſome harbour, and at length entering the mouth of a river, were carried up by the tide into a lake whence the ſtream proceeded.

As ſoon as they were landed, they pitched their tents on the ſhore, not yet daring to wander far from it. The river afforded them plenty of very large ſalmons; the air was ſoft and temperate; the ſoil appeared to be fruitful, and the paſturage very good. The days in winter were much longer than in Greenland, and they had leſs ſnow than in Iceland *. Entirely ſatisfied with their new reſidence, they erected houſes, and ſpent the winter there.

But before the ſetting in of this ſeaſon, a German who was of their company, named TYRKER, was one day

* Arngrim adds, from the ancient chronicles, that their ſhorteſt day was ſix, and their night eighteen hours. But it muſt be conſeſſed, that nothing can be more uncertain than this reckoning by hours, among a people who had no exact method of computing time. The arguments of Torfæus on this ſubject make it evident, that the old Icelandic word which we tranſlate HOUR, is of a very vague and undetermined ſignification; and that the ancient chronicles may be ſo underſtood as to give us room to conclude that at the winter ſolſtice the ſun roſe there at 8 in the morning, and ſet at 4. This gives us the 49th degree, which is the latitude of Canada and Newfoundland. See the Supplement to Torfæus's Ancient Vinland, &c. *Firſt Edit.*

day miſſing. Leif, apprehenſive for the ſafety of a man who had been long in his father's family, and was an excellent mechanic, ſent his people all about to hunt for him. He was at length found, ſinging and leaping, and expreſſing the moſt extravagant joy by his diſcourſe and geſtures. The aſtoniſhed Greenlanders enquired the reaſon of ſuch ſtrange behaviour, and it was not without difficulty, owing to the difference of their languages, that Tyrker made them underſtand he had diſcovered wild grapes near a place which he pointed out. Excited by this news, they immediately went thither, and brought back ſeveral bunches to their commander, who was equally ſurprized. Leif ſtill doubted whether they were grapes; but the German aſſured him he was born in a country where vines grew, and that he knew them too well to be miſtaken. Yielding to this proof, Leif named the country VINLAND, or the Land of Wine.

Leif returned to Greenland in the ſpring; but one of his brothers, named THORVALD, thinking he had left the diſcovery imperfect, obtained from Eric this ſame veſſel and thirty men. Thorvald arriving at Vinland, made uſe of the houſes built by Leif, and living on fiſh, which was in great plenty, paſſed the winter there. In the ſpring he took part of his people, and ſet out weſtward to examine the country.— They met every where with very pleaſing landſcapes, all the coaſts covered with foreſts, and the ſhores with a black ſand. They ſaw a multitude of little iſlands divided from each other by ſmall arms of the ſea, but

no marks of either wild beafts, or of men, except a heap of wood piled up in the form of a pyramid.—Having fpent the fummer in this furvey, they returned in autumn to their winter quarters; but the fummer following, Thorvald being defirous of exploring the eaftern and northern coafts, his veffel was a good deal fhattered by a ftorm; and the remainder of that feafon was taken up in repairing her. He afterwards fet up the keel, which was unfit for fervice, at the extremity of a neck of land, thence called KIELLARNAES, or Cape-Keel *. He then proceeded to furvey the eaftern coafts, where he gave names to feveral Bays and Capes which he then difcovered.

On his landing one day, attracted by the beauty of the fhore, he was aware of three little leathern canoes, in each of which were three perfons feemingly half-afleep. Thorvald and his companions inftantly ran in and feized them all excepting one, who efcaped; and by a ferocity as imprudent as it was cruel, put them to death the fame day. Soon afterwards, as they lay on the fame coaft, they were fuddenly alarmed by the arrival of a great number of thefe little veffels, which covered the whole bay. Thorvald gave immediate orders to his party to defend themfelves with planks and boards againft their darts, which quite filled the air; and the favages having in vain wafted all their arrows, after an hour's combat, betook themfelves to a precipitate flight. The Nor-

wegians

* Or as we fhould exprefs it in Englifh, KEELNESS. T

wegians called them in derision SKRAELINGUES, i. e. small and puny men*: the chronicles tell us, that this kind of men are neither endowed with strength nor courage, and that there would be nothing to fear from a whole army of them. Arngrim adds, that these Skrælingues are the same people who inhabit the western parts of Greenland, and that the Norwegians who are settled on those coasts had called the savages they met with there by the same name.

Thorvald was the only one who was mortally wounded, and dying soon after, paid the penalty that was justly due for his inhuman conduct. As he desired to be buried with a cross at his feet, and another at his head, he seems to have imbibed some idea of Christianity, which at that time began to dawn in Norwegian Greenland. His body was interred at the point of the Cape, where he had intended to make a settlement; which Cape was named from the crosses, KROSSA-NAES or KORSNAES †. The season being too far advanced for undertaking the voyage home, the rest of the crew staid the winter there, and did not reach Greenland till the following spring. We are farther told, that they loaded the vessel with vine-sets, and all the raisins they could preserve.

ERIC

* They also called them SMAELINGS, which signifies the same thing; SMAEL in Icelandic being equivalent to SMALL in English. Vid. Bussæi Not. in Arii Polyhist. Sched. p. 33. T.

† Or, according to the English dialect, CROSS-NESS, or CAPE-CROSS. T.

Eric * had left a third ſon, named Thorstein, who as ſoon as he was informed of his brother Thorvald's death, embarked that very year with his wife Gudride, and a ſelect crew of twenty men. His principal deſign was to bring his brother's body back to Greenland, that it might be buried in a country more agreeable to his *manes*, and in a manner more honourable to his family. But during the whole ſummer the winds proved ſo contrary and tempeſtuous, that after ſeveral fruitleſs attempts, he was driven back to a part of Greenland far diſtant from the colony of his countrymen. Here he was confined during the rigor of the winter, deprived of all aſſiſtance, and expoſed to the ſeverity of ſo rude a climate. Theſe misfortunes were encreaſed by a contagious ſickneſs, which carried off Thorſtein and moſt of his company. His widow took care of her huſband's body, and returning with it in the ſpring, interred it in the burial-place of his family.

Hitherto we have ſeen the Norwegians only making ſlight efforts to eſtabliſh themſelves in Vinland. The year after Thorſtein's death proved more favourable to the deſign of ſettling a colony. A rich Icelander, named Thorfin, whoſe genealogy the chronicles have carefully preſerved, arrived in Greenland from

* M. Mallet ſays, "*Leif avoit* "*laiſſé un troiſieme fils nommé Thorſtein*:" but this is evidently a miſtake, for he tells us in the next line, that Thorstein was the brother of Thorvald; and he had before called Thorvald the brother of Leif. T.

from Norway, with a great number of followers. He cultivated an acquaintance with Leif, who ſince his father Eric's death was head of the colony; and with his conſent eſpouſed Gudride, by whom he acquired a right to thoſe claims her former huſband had on the ſettlements at Vinland. Thither he ſoon went to take poſſeſſion, having with him Gudride and five other women, beſides ſixty ſailors, much cattle, proviſion, and implements of huſbandry. Nothing was omitted that could forward an enterprize of this kind. Soon after his arrival on the coaſt, he caught a great whale, which proved very ſerviceable to the whole company. The paſturage was found to be ſo plentiful and rich, that a bull they had carried over with them became in a ſhort time remarkable for its fierceneſs and ſtrength.

The remainder of that ſummer, and the winter following were ſpent in taking all neceſſary precautions for their preſervation, and in procuring all the conveniences of which they had any idea. The ſucceeding ſummer the Skrelingues or natives of the country came down in crowds, and brought with them various merchandizes * for traffic. It was obſerved that the roaring of the bull terrified them to ſuch a degree that they burſt open the doors of Thorfin's houſe, and crowded in with the utmoſt precipitation. Thorfin ſuffered his people to traffic with them, but ſtrictly forbad

* The chronicles remark, that theſe merchandizes conſiſted chiefly of furs, ſables, the ſkins of white rats, &c.

forbad their ſupplying them with arms, which were what they ſeemed moſt deſirous of obtaining. The Greenland women offered them different kinds of eatables made with milk, of which they were ſo fond, that they came down in crowds to beg them in exchange for their ſkins. Some diſputes that aroſe obliged the Skrelingues to retire, and Thorfin ſurrounded the factory with a ſtrong paliſade to prevent ſurprize.

Nothing memorable occurred the next year. The Skrelingues again offered their commodities, and again begged to have arms in exchange. Theſe being always denied, one of them ſtole an hatchet, and returned highly pleaſed to his companions. Eager to try the new inſtrument, he gave a violent blow to one of his comrades, and killed him on the ſpot. All who were preſent ſtood ſilent with aſtoniſhment 'till one whoſe ſhape and air beſpoke him to be a perſon of ſome authority among them, took up the inſtrument, and after cloſely examining it, threw it with the utmoſt indignation as far as he could into the ſea.

After ſtaying there three years, Thorfin returned home, with a valuable cargo of raiſins and other merchandize; the fame of which ſpreading through the North, the incitements of curioſity and gain drew ſeveral adventurers to Vinland. The author of the chronicle, called the MANUSCRIPT OF FLATEY, relates, that after ſeveral voyages, Thorfin ended his days in Iceland, where he had built a very fine houſe, and lived

lived in ſplendor as one of the firſt lords of the country; that he had a ſon named SNORRO, born in Vinland; that his widow went on a pilgrimage to Rome after his death, and having at her return devoted herſelf entirely to religion, died in a monaſtery in Iceland, near a church erected by her ſon. The ſame author adds, that this account is confirmed by Thorfin himſelf, and mentions the facts as well known to all the world. Another manuſcript relates the ſame circumſtances only with ſome inconſiderable variations.

But to return to the new colony, where Thorfin had without doubt left ſome of his people: two brothers, named HELGUE and FINBOG, Icelanders by birth, going to Greenland, were perſuaded to fit out two veſſels, and undertake a voyage to this new country. FREIDIS, the daughter of Eric Rufus, accompanied them; but this woman, unworthy to belong to ſo illuſtrious a family, impoſed upon the two brothers; and during their ſtay in Vinland, raiſed ſuch diſturbances as ended in the maſſacre of thirty people. Freidis not daring to ſtay after this bloody ſcene, fled to Greenland to her brother Leif, where ſhe ſpent the reſidue of her days, hated and deſpiſed by all mankind. Helgue and Finbog were among the unfortunate victims, and it is probable that thoſe who eſcaped ſettled in the country.

This is the ſubſtance of what we find in the ancient Icelandic writers concerning the diſcovery of VINLAND: and as they only mention it occaſionally, this

accounts

accounts for their ſilence in reſpect to the ſequel. There is reaſon to ſuppoſe, that the people of the North continued to make voyages to Vinland for a long time: but as nothing particular occurred afterwards, hiſtorians deemed it ſufficient to mention ſuch circumſtances as related to its firſt diſcovery and ſettlement. Yet the Icelandic chronicles ſometimes ſpeak of Vinland afterwards. There is one of them in particular (which the critics eſteem very authentic) that makes expreſs mention of a Saxon prieſt, named JOHN, who after having ſerved a church in Iceland for the ſpace of four years, paſſed over to Vinland, with an intention of converting the Norwegian colony; but we may conclude his attempt did not ſucceed, ſince we find he was condemned to death. In the year 1121, ERIC, a biſhop of Greenland, went over there on the ſame errand, but we know not with what ſucceſs. Since that time Vinland ſeems by degrees to have been forgotten in the North; and that part of Greenland which had embraced Chriſtianity being loſt, Iceland alſo fallen from its former ſtate, and the northern nations being waſted by a peſtilence, and weakened by internal feuds, all remembrance of that diſcovery was at length utterly obliterated, and the Norwegian Vinlanders themſelves having no further connection with Europe, were either incorporated into, or deſtroyed by their barbarian neighbours *. Be this as it may, the teſtimony of our

* In his firſt edit. our author was of opinion, that the ſavages called

our ancient chronicles is ſtrongly corroborated by the poſitive teſtimony of ADAM of BREMEN, a well-eſteemed hiſtorian, who lived in the very age when the diſcovery was made. Adam was a virtuous eccleſiaſtic, who received all he relates from the mouth of SWAIN II. * king of Denmark, who had entertained him during the long abode he made in that kingdom. Theſe are his own words †, "The king of Denmark "hath informed me, that another iſland has been diſ-"covered in the ocean, that waſhes Norway or Fin-"mark, which iſland is called Vinland, from the vines "which grow there ſpontaneouſly; and we learn, not "by fabulous hearſay, but by the expreſs report of "certain Danes, that fruits are produced there with-"out cultivation." Hence we ſee, that this was not only admitted as a certain fact in Greenland, Iceland and Norway, but the fame of it was alſo ſpread abroad in Denmark ‡; and we may add in England, Normandy, and undoubtedly much further. Ordericus Vitalis, the

called ESKIMAUX, who inhabit Newfoundland, might poſſibly be deſcended from that Norwegian colony, as being diſtinguiſhed from the other inhabitants of America by their white ſkins, their fair hair, and buſhy beards: but upon reviſal he found reaſon to diſcard this opinion. T.

* Called by the Danes SUENON ESTRIDSEN. *Firſt Edit.*

† Vid. Adam Brem. de ſitu Dan. c. 246.

‡ Rudbek pretends, that in this place ADAM means Finland in Sweden. Among the many bold conjectures of this man, there is not one leſs defenſible than this. Adam of Bremen was well acquainted with Finland, ſince he expreſsly names it in that ſame work. It is needleſs to confute an opinion ſo contrary to probability, and devoid of all foundation.

hiſtorian of the Normans and Engliſh, whom I before mentioned, reckons Vinland along with Greenland, Iceland and the Orkneys, as countries under the dominion of the king of Norway, and whoſe commerce encreaſed his revenues *. What Adam of Bremen immediately adds after the foregoing paſſage, merits likewiſe ſome attention, as it indicates the ſtrong propenſity of the Norwegians for maritime enterprizes, and (what we ſhould little expect from ſo unenlightened a people) for expeditions that had even no other end but to make new diſcoveries. " In advancing " farther towards the North," ſays he, " we meet " with nothing but a boundleſs ſea, covered with e-" normous pieces of ice, and hid in perpetual dark-" neſs." (He certainly means thoſe almoſt continual fogs, ſo well known to ſuch as frequent the ſeas of " North America.) " Harold, prince of Norway, " was lately very near having a fatal proof of this, " when being deſirous of knowing the extent of the " northern ocean, he tried to diſcover it with ſeveral " veſſels ; but the limits of the world being hid from " their ſight by thick darkneſs, they were with diffi-" culty preſerved from deſtruction in that vaſt maſs " of waters." We ſee, notwithſtanding this figurative manner of ſpeaking, that Harold had formed ſome great deſign, concerning which, hiſtory leaves us in the dark ; and without doubt he was not the only one of his age and nation, whoſe enterprizes of this kind

* Order. Vital. hiſt. Eccleſ. ad. an. 1098.

kind are buried in oblivion. Fame, as well as all other ſublunary things, is governed by Chance, and without her aſſiſtance, the attempt made by Alfred the Great to diſcover a north-eaſt paſſage to the Indies, would have ſtill remained unknown to us *. In all

* In the Cotton Library is happily preſerved a Relation of this Voyage, written in the Saxon language by ALFRED himſelf, as he took it down from the mouth of OCTHER, a Norwegian, who had been ſent by him into the Northern ſeas to make diſcoveries. The narrative, it muſt be owned, appears to us in this enlightened age but ſhort and ſuperficial: but if we conſider the time in which it was written, what muſt we think of the amazing capacity of that great monarch, who could conceive or encourage ſuch an attempt, and who could condeſcend to write down with his own hand the reſult of the enquiry, which probably the Norwegian adventurer was not able to do himſelf, and which the king might not chuſe to truſt to the pen of another, who might not have been ſo exact or curious?

In the ſame tract the king has alſo given the report of WULFESTAN, an Anglo-Saxon, whom he had ſent to explore the Baltic. The ſubſtance of Octher's account may be ſeen in Hackluyt's Voyages, and in part in Spelman's Life of Alfred, p. 153. The original was firſt publiſhed with a Latin verſion, at the end of Walker's Lat. tranſlation of Spelman, and has been reprinted (at the end of *Arii Polybiſt. Schedæ de Iſlandia ab Andræa Buſſæo, Hafn.* 1733, *4to.)* under this title, *Periplus* OHTHERI *Halgolando-Norvegi, ut et* WULFSTANI *Angli, ſecundum narrationes eorundem de ſuis, Unius in ultimam plagam ſeptentrionalem, Utriuſque autem in mari Balthico Navigationibus, juſſu* ÆLFREDI MAGNI *Anglorum regis, ſeculo a nativitate Chriſti nono factis; ab* IPSO REGE *Anglo-Saxonicâ linguâ deſcriptus, demum. . . . Latinè verſus, et una cum* "Joh. "Spelmanni Vita Ælfredi Mag- "ni," *è veteri cod. MS. Biblioth. Cotton. editus: Jam vero, ob antiquitatem, et ſeptentrionalis tum temporis ſtatûs cognitionem, repetitus, ac brevibus* NOTIS *adauctus ab* ANDRAEA BUSSAEO.' T.

all ages the Europeans ſeem to have had a wonderful propenſity, peculiar to themſelves, for great and daring enterprizes. Hence we may foreſee, that the glory of pervading the whole globe is reſerved for them. And doubtleſs the time will come, when they will explore and meaſure the vaſt countries of Terra Auſtralis, will cruiſe beneath the Poles, and will ſecurely, and freely in every ſenſe of the expreſſion, SAIL ROUND THE WORLD.

To return to our ſubject. The diſcovery of a diſtant country called Vinland, and the reality of a Norwegian colony's ſettling there, appear to be facts ſo well atteſted on all ſides, and related with circumſtances ſo probable, as to leave no room for any doubt. But to ſettle the geography of the country where this happened, is not an eaſy matter. To ſucceed in an enquiry of this kind, we ſhould know what part of America lies neareſt to Greenland; by what nations it is inhabited; what are their languages and traditions; as alſo the cuſtoms and produce of their countries; branches of knowledge theſe, which we ſhall but very imperfectly learn from the books hitherto publiſhed. Neverthleſs, though we may not be able to aſcertain exactly the ſituation of Vinland, we have ſufficient room to conjecture that this colony could not be far from the coaſts of Labrador, or thoſe of Newfoundland, which are not far from it: nor is there any circumſtance in the relations of the ancient chronicles, but what may be accounted for on ſuch a ſuppoſition.

The

The firſt difficulty that muſt be obviated, is the ſhort ſpace of time that appears to have been taken up in paſſing to this country from Greenland. To this end we muſt obſerve, that the Norwegians might ſet ſail from the weſtern, as well as from the eaſtern coaſt of that country, ſince (as hath been ſaid before) they had ſettled on both ſides of it. Now it is certain, that Davis's Streight, which ſeparates Greenland from the American continent, is very narrow in ſeveral places; and it appears from the journal taken by the learned Mr Ellis, in his voyage to Hudſon's Bay, that his paſſage from Cape Farewell, which is the moſt ſouthern point of Greenland, into the entrance of the Bay, was but ſeven or eight days eaſy ſail with a wind indifferently favourable. The diſtance between the ſame Cape and the neareſt coaſt of Labrador is ſtill much leſs. As it cannot be above two hundred French leagues, the voyage could not take up above ſeven or eight days, even allowing for the delays that muſt have happened to the ancients through their want of that ſkill in navigation which the moderns have ſince acquired. This could therefore appear no ſuch frightful diſtance to adventurers who had newly diſcovered Greenland, which is ſeparated from Iceland at leaſt as far. This reaſoning is ſtill farther enforced, when we reflect that the diſtance of Iceland itſelf, from the neareſt part of Norway, is double to that above-mentioned.

In effect, the hiſtory of the North abounds with relations of maritime expedition of far greater extent than

than was neceſſary for the diſcovery of America. The ſituation of Greenland, relative to this new country, not being ſufficiently known, is the only circumſtance that can prejudice one againſt it; but when we have maſtered the greater object, why ſhould we make any difficulty of the leſs? We ſhould ceaſe to be ſurprized at thoſe ſame men croſſing a ſpace of two hundred leagues, which was the diſtance between them and America, whoſe courage and curioſity had frequently prompted them to traverſe the ocean, and who had been accuſtomed to perform voyages of three or four hundred leagues before they quitted their former ſettlements. We may indeed ſuppoſe, that when they made incurſions into England, France, Spain, or Italy, they were directed by the coaſts, from which they were never far diſtant; but how can the rapidity of their motions be accounted for, if they never loſt ſight of land? How could ſo imperfect a kind of navigation ſerve to convey into England ſuch numerous fleets as ſailed from Denmark and Norway? How were Iceland, the iſles of Faro, Shetland and Greenland explored? There is nothing then in the diſtance of America that can render it unlikely to have been diſcovered by the Norwegians. Let us ſee if there are not other greater difficulties.

The relations handed down to us in the chronicles, and the name affixed to this new diſcovered country, agree in deſcribing it as a ſoil where the vine ſpontaneouſly grows. This circumſtance alone has ſerved with many people to render the whole account ſuſpected;

pected; but on a closer view, we shall find it so far from overthrowing, that it even confirms the other parts of the relation. I shall not evade the difficulty (as I might) by answering, that very possibly the Norwegians might be so little acquainted with grapes, as to mistake currants for them, which in the Northern languages are called *Viin-bær* *, or vine-berries; and of which in several places they make a kind of fermented liquor: but I can assert on the faith of the most credible travellers, that not only in Canada the vine grows without cultivation, and bears a small well-tasted fruit; but that it is also found in far more northern latitudes, and even where the winters are very severe. The evidence of Mr. Ellis † may here render all others needless. This curious and sensible observer met with the same kind of vine about the English settlements in Hudson's Bay; the fruit of which he compares to the currants of the Levant.— Now Labrador is not far from thence; it lies partly in the same, and partly in a more southern latitude, and their several productions seem to be much alike. Besides, as the Europeans never penetrated very far into the country, it would not prove that there were no vines there, even if THEY had not met with any. But we have room to expect greater discoveries on this subject from Mr. KALM, a Swedish botanist, educated

cated

* *Viin-bær*, or rather *Win-ber*, is a general name in the North for Gooseberries, Currants, and Grapes. T.

† Voyage to Hudson's Bay, by Mr. Ellis. Vol. II.

cated under Linnæus, who ſome years ſince made a curious progreſs through Canada, with a view to its natural hiſtory and productions. According to him, the colony of VINLAND was in the iſland of Newfoundland, which is only ſeparated from the continent of Labrador by a narrow ſtreight of a few leagues called BELLE-ISLE *. This he has undertaken to prove in a part of his work not yet publiſhed; nor can any writer inveſtigate ſuch an inquiry ſo well as one who has been himſelf upon the ſpot.

As to the other circumſtances of the relation, the account given by the ancient chronicles agrees in all reſpects with the reports of modern voyagers. Theſe tell us, that the native ſavages of thoſe countries, from the frequent uſe they make of them in fiſhing, can in a ſhort time collect together a vaſt number of canoes; that they are very ſkilful with their bows and arrows; that on the coaſts they fiſh for whales, and in the inland parts live by hunting; ſo that their merchandize conſiſts of whale-bone and various kinds of ſkins and furs; that they are very fond of iron or hardware, eſpecially arms, hatchets, and other inſtruments of like ſort †; that they are very apt to rob ſtrangers, but are otherwiſe cowardly and unwarlike. If to this picture you add, that they are for the moſt part of a middle ſtature, and little ſkilled in the art of war, it is no wonder that the Norwegians, the largeſt,

* Kalm's Reſa til Norra-America. Tome ii. p. 471.

† Vid. Ellis ubi ſupra.

largeſt, ſtrongeſt and moſt active people of Europe ſhould look upon them with contempt, as a poor, weak, degenerate race. It is remarkable that the name they gave them of SKRELINGUES is the ſame with which they denoted the Greenlanders when they firſt diſcovered them. In reality theſe GREENLANDERS and the ESKIMAUX ſeem to have been one people; and this likeneſs between them, which has ſo much ſtruck the moderns, could not fail of appearing in a ſtronger light to the Norwegians, who were ſtill better able to compare them together. "I believe, ſays "Mr. Ellis, that the Eſkimaux are the ſame people "with the Greenlanders; and this ſeems the more "probable, when we conſider the narrowneſs of Da-"vis's Streight, and the vagabond ſtrolling life we "find all this nation accuſtomed to lead wherever we "meet with them." This is alſo the opinion of Mr. Egede, who knew the Greenlanders better than any body. He obſerves, that according to their own accounts, Davis's Streight is only a deep bay, which runs on, narrowing towards the north, till the oppoſite American continent can be eaſily diſcerned from Greenland, and that the extremity of this bay ends in a river, over which, wandering ſavages, inured to cold, might eaſily paſs from one land to the other, even if they had had no canoes.

The reſult of all this ſeems to be, that there can be no doubt, but that the Norwegian Greenlanders diſcovered the American continent; that the place where they ſettled was either the country of Labrador, or

 Newfound-

Newfoundland, and that their colony ſubſiſted there a good while. But then this is all we can ſay about it with any certainty. To endeavour to aſcertain the exact ſite, extent and fortune of the eſtabliſhment, would be a fruitleſs labour. Time and chance may poſſibly one day inform us of theſe circumſtances. I ſhall not therefore amuſe the reader with uncertain conjectures; neither ſhall I trouble him with ſuch reflections as he is able to make much better than myſelf.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the cuſtoms and manners of the ancient Northern nations.

WHOEVER attempts to delineate the manners of the ancient inhabitants of the North, will find their love of war and paſſion for arms among the moſt characteriſtic and expreſſive lines of the portrait. Their prejudices, their cuſtoms, their daily occupations, their amuſements, in ſhort, every action of their lives were all impreſſed with this paſſion. They paſſed the greateſt part of their time either in camps or on board their fleets, employed in real engagements, in preparations for them, or in ſham fights; for whenever they were conſtrained to live in peace, the re-

ſemblance

ſemblance of war furniſhed out their higheſt entertainment. They then had reviews, mock battles, which frequently ended in real ones, tournaments, the bodily exerciſes of wreſtling, boxing, racing, &c. The reſt of their time was commonly ſpent in hunting *, public buſineſs, drinking and ſleeping. " The Ger-" mans," ſays Tacitus, " when not engaged in war, " paſs their time in indolence, feaſting and ſleep. The " braveſt and moſt warlike among them do nothing " themſelves; but transfer the whole care of the " houſe, family and poſſeſſions to the females, the " old men and ſuch as are infirm among them: And " the ſame people, by a ſtrange contradiction of na-" ture, both love inaction, and hate peace." All the Celtic nations lie under the ſame reproach from the Greek and Roman authors; and it is eaſy to conceive, that a people who affixed ideas of contempt to all labour of body and mind, had for the moſt part nothing

* So Cæſar writes of the Germans, *Vita omnis in venationibus atque in ſtudiis rei-militaris conſiſtit.*— Tacitus is believed to have ſaid the ſame thing in the paſſage quoted below, but as ſome of the words are thought to be corrupt, our author has dropt them in his quotation. The whole paſſage ſtands in the copies thus, *Quotiens bellum non ineunt*, NON *multum venatibus; plus per otium tranſigunt, dediti ſomno ciboque.* (Tacit. Germ. c. 15.) The learned are generally of opinion, that the ſecond NON here is ſpurious, and that we ſhould read *multum venatibus*, or *tum vitam venatibus*, &c. But Pelloutier thinks Tacitus meant to inſinnate that the Germans beſtow a ſmall portion of their time in hunting, but much more in idleneſs, feaſting and ſleeping. Hiſt. des Celtes. tom. i. p. 449. T.

nothing elſe to do but to carouſe and ſleep, whenever the ſtate did not call them to arms. This was the badge and nobleſt privilege of their liberty; every free man placed his glory and happineſs in being often invited to ſolemn entertainments; and the hopes of partaking of eternal feaſts filled, as we have ſeen, the North with heroes. Other pleaſures and other rewards have been conceived under the influence of other climes: All nations have in their infancy been governed by the force of climate; and their firſt legiſlators, far from endeavouring to ſtem this torrent but borne away with it themſelves, have ever by their laws and inſtitutions enlarged and encreaſed its natural prevalence. "Among the Celts (as their learned "hiſtorian tells us) there was no national or provin- "cial aſſembly held; no civil or religious feſtival "obſerved; no birth-day, marriage or funeral pro- "perly ſolemnized; no treaty of alliance or friend- "ſhip entered into, in which feaſting did not bear a "principal part *." In all the hiſtorical monuments of ancient Scandinavia, we conſtantly hear of frequent and exceſſive feaſtings †. Tacitus obſerves, that the plentiful

* Vid. Pelloutier Hiſt. des Celtes. Tom. i. lib. 2. chap. 12.

† We find remarkable inſtances in the Icelandic Chronicles, quoted by Arngrim Jonas. Crymog. lib. i. cap. 6. p. 54. Two brothers in Iceland at the funeral of their father, made a feaſt for 1200 perſons, and regaled them fourteen days. Another inhabitant of Iceland entertained for the ſame number of days not leſs than 900 perſons, and at laſt ſent them away with preſents. Feaſts of this ſort were frequent in Norway and throughout all the North. *1ſt Edit.*

plentiful tables of the chiefs, were, among the Germans, the wages of their dependants *. Nor could a great lord or chieftain take a readier way to attract a numerous train of followers, than by often making magnificent entertainments. It was at table that the Germans consulted together on their most important concerns, such as the electing of their princes, the entering into war, or the concluding of peace, &c. On the morrow they re-considered the resolutions of the preceding night, supposing, adds the same historian, "that the proper time to take each others opinions "was when the soul was too open for disguise; and "to determine, when it was too cautious to err."— The common liquors at these carousals were either beer, mead or wine when they could get it: These they drank out of earthen or wooden pitchers, or else out of the horns of wild bulls with which their forests abounded, or lastly out of the SCULLS of their enemies. The principal person at the table took the cup first, and rising up, saluted by name either him who sat next him, or him who was nearest in rank; then he drank it off, and causing it to be filled up again to the brim, presented it to the man whom he had saluted †. Hence came the custom of drinking to

* *Nam epulæ, et quamquam incompti, largi tamen apparatus, pro stipendio cedunt.* Mor. Germ. cap. 14.

† This ancient ceremony is still kept up, at solemn feasts, in some of the Colleges in our Universities.——In like manner our custom of drinking to the memory of departed persons, is evidently a relique

to the health of the guefts: But I know not whether that of drinking to the honour of the Gods was generally practifed among all the ' Gothic and' Celtic people, or only among fome of the northern nations. Snorro Sturlefon fays, "That in the folemn feftivals, "fuch as ufually followed the facrifices, they emptied what was called the Cup of ODIN, to obtain "victory and a glorious reign; then the cups of NIORD and of FREY, for a plentiful feafon; after which "feveral ufed to take off another to BRAGE *, the "God of Eloquence and Poetry." The Scandinavians were fo much addicted to this cuftom, that the firft miffionaries, unable to abolifh it, were forced inftead of thefe falfe deities to fubftitute the true God, Jefus Chrift and the faints; to whofe honour they devoutly drank for many ages. In the pagan times they alfo drank to the heroes, and to fuch of their friends as had fallen bravely in battle. Laftly, it was at thefe feafts, for the moft part, that thofe ASSOCIATIONS were formed and confirmed, which the old Chronicles fo often mention. There was fcarcely a valiant man who was not a member of one or more of thefe focieties; the chief tie of which was a folemn obligation entered

relique of the ancient fuperftition of drinking to the manes of their heroes, kings and friends.——*Heroum, regum, amicorum, et in bello fortiter rem gerentium, memoriales fcyphos 'exhauriebant,' quibus eorum manibus parentare fe credebant.* Wormius apud Barthol. Cauf. contempt. mort. p. 127. T.

* Vid. Barthol. de Cauf. contempt. mort. lib. i. cap. 8. p. 128.

entered into, to defend and protect their companions on all occasions, and to revenge their deaths at the hazard of their own lives *. This oath was taken and renewed at their festivals, which had also their respective laws. Fraternities of this sort still subsisted after the Christian religion was received in the North, but by degrees the object was changed. When the harbouring projects of enmity and revenge were forbidden at them, these meetings had no other object or support but drunkenness and intemperance. More than two hundred years after the Scandinavians had embraced Christianity there were still confraternities of which the first nobility were members. But the disorders

* In the early state of society, when the laws were too weak to afford protection, individuals had no other means of securing their lives and property, but by entering into these associations, in which a number of men engaged to vindicate and avenge each other. These confederacies, which were at first necessary for self-preservation, and might originally be confined to self-defence, often proceeded afterwards to act offensively, and so were productive of great mischiefs.

Confraternities of the same kind prevailed in this kingdom, not only during the Anglo-Saxon times, but for some ages after the conquest. They were called BANDSHIPS, and were often under the patronage of some great man; they had public badges by which each band or confederacy was distinguished, and at length grew to such a pass as to support each other in all quarrels, robberies, murders and other outrages: this occasioned a particular act of parliament for their suppression, 1 Rich. II. chap. 7.——Dr. Hickes has preserved a very curious bond of this kind, which he calls *Sodalitium*; it was drawn up in the Anglo-Saxon times, and contains many particulars which strongly mark the manners and character of those rude ages. See his *Dissertatio Epistolaris*, p. 21. T.

disorders committed at these meetings encreasing, the Councils were at last obliged to suppress them *.

While the attention of these people was thus engrossed by their passion for arms, and the pleasures of the table, we may conclude that love held no violent dominion over them. It is besides well known, that the inhabitants of the North are not of very quick sensibility. The ideas and modes of thinking of the Scandinavians were in this respect very different from those of the Asiatics and more southern nations; who by a contrast as remarkable as it is common, have ever felt for the female sex the warm passion of love, devoid of any real esteem. Being at the same time tyrants and slaves; laying aside their own reason, and

* The reader will find many curious particulars relating to the above-mentioned confraternities, (in the antient Teutonic GYLTEN, sometimes written KELTEN, or GILDS as they are now called in the North) in BARTHOLIN; who has given some of the laws or statutes observed by them, particularly those found in a MS. of the thirteenth century.——One of these statutes will give us an idea of the sobriety of those times: *Si quis pro ebrietate ceciderit in ipsa domo convivii, vel antequam propriam curiam intraverit, Oram* (a small piece of money) *persolvat.* Not less remarkable are the statutes of another confraternity instituted in honour of S. Olave king of Norway; among which we find these: *Quicunque potum suum effundit latius quam pede velare poterit,* VI. *Denarios persolvat. Quicunque dormierit in banco convivii in conspectu fratrum, Oram persolvat. Quicunque ebrietatis causâ in domo convivii vomitum fecerit, Dimidiam Marcam persolvat,* &c. (Barthol. caus. contempt. mort. &c. p. 133.)

Our modern Corporations and Clubs are evidently the offspring of the ("*in the antient Teutonic* GYLTEN, *sometimes written* KELTEN,") GILDS, or GUILDS of our northern ancestors. T.

requiring none in the object, they have ever made a quick transition from adoration to contempt, and from sentiments of the most extravagant and violent love, to those of the most cruel jealousy or of an indifference still more insulting. We find the reverse of all this among the northern nations, who did not so much consider the other sex as made for their pleasure, as to be their equals and companions, whose esteem, as valuable as their other favours, could only be obtained by constant attentions, by generous services, and by a proper exertion of virtue and courage. I conceive that this will at first sight be deemed a paradox, and that it will not be an easy matter to reconcile a manner of thinking which supposes so much delicacy, with the rough unpolished character of this people. Yet I believe the observation is so well grounded, that one may venture to assert, that it is this same people who have contributed to diffuse through all Europe that spirit of equity, of moderation, and generosity shewn by the stronger to the weaker sex, which is at this day the distinguishing characteristic of European manners; nay that we even owe to them that spirit of gallantry which was so little known to the Greeks and Romans, how polite soever in other respects.

That there should in the North be a communication of liberty and equality between the two sexes, is what one might expect to find there in those ancient times, when mens property was small and almost upon an equality; when their manners were simple;

when

when their paſſions diſcloſed themſelves but ſlowly, and then under the dominion of reaſon; being moderated by a rigorous climate and their hard way of living; and laſtly, when the ſole aim of government was to preſerve and extend liberty. But the Scandinavians went ſtill farther, and theſe ſame men, who on other occaſions were too high-ſpirited to yield to any earthly power; yet in whatever related to the fair ſex ſeem to have been no longer tenacious of their rights or independence. The principles of the ancient Gothic or Celtic religion will afford us proofs of this reſpect paid to the ladies, and at the ſame time may poſſibly help us to account for it. I have often aſſerted that the immediate intervention of the Deity, even in the ſlighteſt things, was one of their moſt eſtabliſhed doctrines, and that every, even the moſt minute appearance of nature, was a manifeſtation of the will of heaven to thoſe who underſtood its language. Thus mens involuntary motions, their dreams, their ſudden and unforeſeen inclinations being conſidered as the ſalutary admonitions of heaven, became the objects of ſerious attention. And a univerſal reſpect could not but be paid to thoſe who were conſidered as the organs or inſtruments of a beneficent Deity. Now women muſt appear much more proper than men for ſo noble a purpoſe, who being commonly more ſubject than we to the unknown laws of temperament and conſtitution, ſeem leſs to be governed by reflection, than by ſenſation and natural inſtinct. Hence it was that the Germans admitted them into their councils, and conſulted

ſulted with them on the buſineſs of the ſtate. Hence it was that among them, as alſo among the Gauls, there were ten propheteſſes for one prophet; whereas in the Eaſt we find the contrary proportion, if indeed there was ever known an inſtance in thoſe countries of a female worker of miracles. Hence alſo it was, that nothing was formerly more common in the North, than to meet with women who delivered oracular informations, cured the moſt inveterate maladies, aſſumed whatever ſhape they pleaſed, raiſed ſtorms, chained up the winds, travelled through the air, and in one word, performed every function of the Fairy-art. Thus endowed with ſupernatural powers, theſe propheteſſes being converted as it were into fairies or demons, influenced the events they had predicted, and all nature became ſubject to their command. Tacitus puts this beyond a diſpute when he ſays, "The Germans ſuppoſe ſome divine and prophetic quality reſident in their women, and are careful neither to diſregard their admonitions, nor to neglect their anſwers *." Nor can it be doubted but that the ſame notions prevailed among the Scandinavians. Strabo relates that the Cimbri were accom-

* Tacit. de Mor. Ger. c. 8.—There is a remarkable paſſage on the ſame ſubject in Polyen. Stratagem. lib. i. and in Plutarch "*De virtutibus mulierum.*"—See KEYSLER's "*Diſſertatio de mulieribus fatidicis veterum Celtarum gentiumque Septentrionalium,*" in his learned treatiſe, "*Antiquitates Selectæ Septentrionales,*" &c. 1720. 12mo p. 371. T.

accompanied by venerable and hoary-headed prophetesses, apparrelled in long linen robes most splendidly white. We also find this people always attended by their wives even in their most distant expeditions, hearing them with respect, and after a defeat, more afraid of their reproaches than of the blows of the enemy. To this we may add, that the men being constantly employed either in war or hunting, left to the women the care of acquiring those useful branches of knowledge which made them regarded by their husbands as prophetesses and oracles. Thus to them belonged the study of simples and the art of healing wounds, an art as mysterious in those times, as the occasions of it were frequent. In the ancient chronicles of the North, we find the matrons and the young women always employed in dressing the wounds of their husbands or lovers. It was the same with dreams; which the women alone were versed in the art of interpreting *.

But this is not all. At a time when piracy and a fondness for seeking adventures exposed weakness to continual and unexpected attacks, the women, especially those of celebrated beauty, stood in want sometimes of deliverers, and almost always of defenders. Every young warrior, eager after glory, (and this was often the character of whole nations,) must have been glad then to take upon him an office, which promised

such

* Probably because the women paid more attention to them than the men, and gave more credit to them. *First Edit.*

ſuch juſt returns of fame, which flattered the moſt agreeable of all paſſions, and at the ſame time gratified another almoſt as ſtrong, that for a wandering and rambling life. We are apt to value what we acquire, in proportion to the labour and trouble it coſts us. Accordingly the hero looked upon himſelf as ſufficiently rewarded for all his pains, if he could at length obtain the fair hand of her he had delivered; and it is obvious how honourable ſuch marriages muſt have been among the people who thought in this manner. This emulation would quickly encreaſe the number of thoſe gallant knights: And the women, on their parts, would not fail to acquire a kind of ſtatelineſs, conſidering themſelves as no leſs neceſſary to the glory of their lovers, than to their happineſs and pleaſure. That fair one who had ſtood in need of ſeveral champions, yielded only to the moſt courageous; and ſhe who had never been in a ſituation that required protectors, was ſtill deſirous of the lover who had proved himſelf capable of encountering all kind of dangers for her ſake. This was more than enough to inflame ſuch ſpirits as theſe with an emulation of ſurpaſſing each other, and of diſplaying their courage and intrepidity. Beſides, the character of the northern women themſelves left the men no other leſs glorious means of gaining their hearts. Naturally chaſte and proud, there was no other way but this to come at them. Educated under the influence of the ſame prejudices concerning honour as the men, they were early taught to deſpiſe thoſe who ſpent their youth

youth in a peaceful obfcurity. All the hiftorical records of ancient Scandinavia prove what I advance. We fee there the turn for chivalry as it were in the bud. The hiftory of other nations fhews it afterwards as it were opening and expanding in Spain, France, Italy and England, being carried there by the fwarms that iffued from the North. It is in reality this fame fpirit, reduced afterwards within jufter bounds, which has been productive of that polite gallantry fo peculiarly obfervable in our manners, which adds a double relifh to the moft pleafing of all focial bands, which unites the lafting charms of fentiment, regard, and friendfhip, with the fleeting fire of love, which tempers and animates one by the other, adds to their number, power, and duration, and which cherifhes and unfolds fenfibility, that moft choice gift of nature, without which neither decorum, propriety, chafte friendfhip, nor true generofity can exift among men. It would be needlefs to prove, that we are not indebted for this manner of thinking to the ancient Romans. We may appeal for this to all who know any thing of their character. But though I affert that the refpect we fhew to the fair fex is probably derived from that fuperftitious reverence which our anceftors had for them, and is only a relique of that ancient authority, which the women enjoyed among the northern nations; I ought alfo to prove by facts an opinion fo contrary to eftablifhed prejudices, and at firft fight fo unlikely to be true. To do this will be eafy.

Every

Every page of northern hiſtory preſents us with warriors as gallant as intrepid. Inſpired by that paſſion which Montagne calls "the ſpring of great actions," king Regner Lodbrog, whom I have ſo often mentioned, and who was one of the moſt celebrated heroes of his time, ſignalized his youth by a gallant exploit. A Swediſh prince had a daughter named Thora, whoſe beauty was celebrated throughout the North. Fearing leſt ſhe might fall into the hands of a raviſher, he ſecured her, probably during his abſence, in a caſtle of his, under the guardianſhip of one of his officers. This man falling violently in love with his ward, abſolutely refuſed to reſign his charge, and had taken ſuch precautions to keep her in his hands, that the Swediſh prince in vain endeavoured to ſet her at liberty. Deſpairing at laſt to ſucceed in the attempt himſelf, he publiſhed through all the neighbouring countries, that he would beſtow his daughter in marriage on any perſon, of whatever condition, who ſhould conquer her raviſher *. Of all thoſe who aſpired to ſo noble a prize, young Regner was the happy man who delivered and married the fair captive. This exploit, as he tells us in an ode which he wrote a very little time before his death, placed

* Vid. Torf. Hiſt. Norveg. tom. i. lib. 10. This officer being probably called Orm, i. e. Serpent, which was a name very common in thoſe times, the poets took occaſion to ſay that Thora was guarded by a furious Dragon. Allegories of this ſort are quite in the taſte and manner of that age. *Firſt Edit.*

placed him in the rank of heroes. After Thora's decease, Regner espoused a young shepherdess whom he had seen by accident on the coast of Norway. As the particular circumstances of this event are to my present purpose, I will briefly relate them from a very ancient Icelandic history of the life of Regner *.

The name of this most beautiful nymph was ASLAUGA, who no sooner saw a fleet draw near the shore where she fed her flock, but yielding to the natural passion of her sex, repaired to a neighbouring fountain, where she carefully washed her face and hands, and combed her long golden hair which hung down to her feet. The people whom Regner had ordered on shore to seek for provisions, were so amazed at her beauty, that they returned to their commander, bringing nothing back with them but astonishment and admiration. The King surprised at their account, was desirous to judge himself whether the young maid was really so handsome as to make his men forget the orders he had given them. With this design he sent one of his chief attendants to invite Aslauga on board; but she was prudent enough to refuse him, till Regner had given his honour, that no attempts should be made on her virtue. Then suffering herself to be conducted to the king, he no sooner saw her, than struck with admiration, he sung extemporary verses to this effect: " O most mighty Odin! what a

* Vid. Regnara Lodbrogs Saga. c. 5. ap. Bioneri Histor. Reg. Her. & Pugil, Res præclar. gest. Stockholm. 1737.

" ſweet and unexpected conſolation would it be, if
" this young and lovely ſhepherdeſs would permit
" me to join my hands to hers as a pledge of eternal
" alliance !" Aſlauga perceiving that the king's paſſion every moment increaſed, was apprehenſive he would not keep his word, and in anſwer to ſuch a flattering compliment, only returned theſe verſes, (for ſuch language was at that time much more polite than proſe, and argued, as we ſhall ſee preſently, good breeding and wit,) " O prince, you will deſerve
" to undergo ſome misfortune, if you fail in your
" word to me. I have paid my reſpects to the king,
" and he ought now to ſend me back to my parents."
This anſwer only inflamed the Daniſh monarch's love, and he propoſed to carry her to his court, where her happy lot ſhould be the envy of all her companions. To add weight to his intreaties, he offered her a rich veſtment ornamented with ſilver, which had belonged to his former queen Thora, and ſtill addreſſing her in verſe, " Take," ſays he, " if you are wiſe, this robe
" embroidered with ſilver, which belonged to Thora.
" Rich garments are made for you. The lovely
" hands of Thora have often run over this piece of
" work, and it will be dear to the laſt moment of
" life, to him whom the North hath called the prince
" of heroes."

Aſlauga was ſtill proof againſt this flattering attack : " No !" replied ſhe ſinging, " I muſt not ac-
" cept of ſo fine a robe, the ornament of queen Tho-
" ra. I am unworthy to bear ſuch magnificent gar-
" ments ;

"ments; a ſtuff, dark and coarſe, is all that is befit-
"ting a ſhepherdeſs whoſe reſting-place is a cottage,
"and who wanders along the ſandy ſhores after her
"flock." Recurring at length to a more natural language, ſhe aſſured the king, that notwithſtanding the warmth of his paſſion, ſhe was determined not to yield to it, till ſhe had ſeen proofs of his conſtancy; that he muſt therefore finiſh the expedition which called him out of his kingdom, and then at his return, if he ſtill perſevered in the ſame ſentiments, ſhe was ready to attend into Denmark thoſe whom he ſhould ſend to conduct her thither. The amorous Regner was forced to ſubſcribe to theſe conditions, and immediately departed, proteſting that ſhe ſhould very ſoon ſee him return victorious, and more captivated with her than ever. In a few months the king repaired with his fleet to the coaſt where the fair one dwelt, who was ſoon conducted to him. She had, however, ſufficient addreſs and aſcendant over him to obtain that their marriage ſhould not be ſolemnized till they returned to Denmark, and could celebrate it in preſence of the whole court.

This relation, which is literally copied from the original, ſhews that decency and decorum were not unknown to the Scandinavians of thoſe days: for to ſee theſe obſerved in a caſe where even among the moſt poliſhed people they are too often neglected, and where the moſt bewitching of all paſſions, when aided by power, unites to caſt a veil over them, is the ſtrongeſt evidence that can poſſibly be required. For the

the reſt, I will not promiſe that the ancient writer, who has given us this ſtory, may not have added ſome circumſtances of his own; though the traditionary records of the country confirm his narrative, and Torfæus places it among the beſt-authenticated hiſtories: but even ſuppoſing the greateſt part of it fictitious, it is enough that it be ancient, and written by one well verſed in the hiſtory and manners of his country. It is really of little conſequence whether Regner actually performed, or not, every action the chronicles relate, provided they attribute nothing to him but what correſponds with the genius and character of his contemporaries.

It were eaſy to produce other inſtances to juſtify the deſcription I have drawn above, but it is enough to relate only one more, which we meet with in the life of HARALD HARFAGRE, of whom we have ſo often ſpoken. His birth and merits were equally illuſtrious; his courage, his fine figure, and his long golden ſilky locks, conſpired to render him, according to our chronicles, the ſecret paſſion of the moſt lovely princeſſes of his time.

Notwithſtanding theſe accompliſhments, a young beauty named GIDA, the daughter of a rich Norwegian lord, made him experience a reſiſtance to which he had not been accuſtomed. Harald, in love with her from hearſay, commiſſioned ſome lords of his court to make her an offer of his hand: but far from readily accepting a propoſal which would have rendered her the envy of all the young ladies of the North,

North, ſhe haughtily anſwered, That to merit her love, Harald ſhould ſignalize himſelf by more noble exploits than he had hitherto performed; that ſhe diſdained to ſhare the fortune of a prince whoſe territories were ſo ſmall, and that ſhe could never eſteem him worthy of her, till like the other ſovereigns of the North, he had reduced all Norway under his power. Inſtead of being piqued at this refuſal, Harald's admiration for the ambitious Gida was redoubled, and he made a vow to neglect his fine hair, till he had compleated the conqueſt of Norway: nor did he marry her, till all that kingdom ſubmitted to him *.

Now it is not to be ſuppoſed that ſentiments of this ſort were peculiar only to Harald, Regner, or ſome one ſingle hero. The northern chronicles preſent us every where with inſtances of this female ſovereignty: and we always find none more ſubject to it than thoſe who were moſt diſtinguiſhed for their noble birth and gallant actions.

As few young men of any rank were able to obtain an advantageous or honourable alliance, until they had diſtinguiſhed themſelves in war, we may naturally conclude they could not marry till late in life. This is alſo confirmed by other proofs. Cæſar ſays, that " among the Germans, the greateſt praiſe is al-" lowed to thoſe who remain the longeſt unmarried; " and that it is reckoned very ſhameful for young " men to be acquainted with women before they are

" TWENTY

* Vid. Torf. H. N. tom. ii. lib. 1.

"TWENTY YEARS of age *." Tacitus adds, that "the "Germans retain the vigour of youth the longer, by "deferring their union with the other ſex ; nor are "they in haſte to marry their daughters †." That age once paſt, it was common for the people of the North to marry two wives or more, and this was a very ancient cuſtom. Men of wealth and power conſidered a number of wives as a mark of grandeur. And according to Tacitus ‡, political reaſons alſo ſometimes brought about theſe matches, ſince the great were often obliged to yield to the importunity of families which ſought their alliance. The Chriſtian religion, not without great difficulty, got the better of this cuſtom ; which ſtill prevailed in the North ſo late as the tenth century. All the children claimed equally from their father, nor was the title of baſtard given to any, unleſs to ſuch as were born without any kind of matrimonial rite. Nevertheleſs, one of the wives ſeems to have poſſeſſed a ſuperior rank, and to have been conſidered as the chief and moſt legitimate. But as it was her diſtinguiſhed prerogative to accompany her lord to the grave or funeral pile, ſhe would hardly be an object of envy or jealouſy among the ladies of the preſent age.

The

* Cæſ. de Bell. Gall. lib. vi. 19. *Hoc alii ſtaturam, alii vires, nervoſque confirmari putant.* T.

† Tacit. Germ. c. 20.

‡ He ſays, the Germans in his time were for the moſt part content with one wife, *Exceptis admodum paucis*, adds he, *qui non libidine, ſed ob nobilitatem plurimis nuptiis ambiuntur.* De mor. Ger. c. 18. T.

The matrimonial ceremonies were very ſimple, and chiefly conſiſted in feaſting *. The bridegroom having obtained the maiden's conſent, together with that of her parents and guardians, appointed the day; and having aſſembled his own relations and friends, ſent ſome of them to receive in his name the bride and her portion from her father. The friends were anſwerable for the charge that was committed to them, and if they abuſed their truſt, the law amerced them in a ſum treble to what was paid for murder. The father or guardian of the young woman attended her alſo to the huſband's houſe, and there gave her into his hands †. After this, the new-married pair ſat down to table with their gueſts, who drank to their healths along with thoſe of the gods and heroes. The bride's friends then took her up and bore her on their ſhoulders, which was a mark of eſteem among the Goths; her father afterwards led her to the nuptial bed, a great number of lights being carried before her; a cuſtom known to the Greeks and Romans, and ſtill in uſe in ſome parts of the North. The marriage being conſummated, the huſband made his wife ſeveral preſents, ſuch as a pair of oxen for the plough, an harneſſed

* Vid. Dalin. Suea-Rikes Hiſt. tom. i. c. 9.

† At the ſame time he commonly made ſome ſpeech to this effect: "I give thee my daughter in honourable wed-lock; to "have the half of thy bed, the "keeping of the keys of thy "houſe, one THIRD of the money "thou art at preſent poſſeſſed of, "or ſhalt poſſeſs hereafter, and to "enjoy the other rights appointed by law." *First Edit.*

neffed horfe, a buckler, together with a lance and a fword. " This was to fignify," fays Tacitus *, " that " fhe ought not to lead an idle and luxurious life, " but that fhe was to be a partaker with him in his " labours, and a companion in dangers, which they " were to fhare together in peace and war." He adds, that " the women on their parts gave fome " arms; this was the facred band of their union, " thefe their myftic rites, and thefe the deities who " prefided over their marriage." The yoked oxen, the caparifoned horfe, and the arms, all ferved to inftruct the women how they were to lead their life, and how perhaps it might be terminated. The arms were to be carefully preferved, and being enabled by the ufe the hufband made of them, were to be configned as portions for their daughters, and to be handed down to pofterity.

The German women have been juftly noted for fidelity to the marriage-bed; and indeed chaftity feems to have been the general character of this nation. Let us fee what that moft excellent writer Tacitus fays on this fubject: " A ftrict regard for the fanctity of the " matrimonial ftate characterizes the Germans, and " deferves our higheft applaufe. . . . Among " them female virtue runs no hazard of being de- " bauched by the outward objects which are prefent- " ed to the fenfes, or of being corrupted by fuch fo- " cial gaieties as inflame the paffions. The art of cor- " refponding

* Tac. de mor. Germ. c. 18.

" reſponding by letters is equally unknown to both
" ſexes. Very few adulteries happen in that popu-
" lous nation: where the power of inſtantly inflict-
" ing puniſhment is granted to the injured huſband;
" who after having cut off her hair in the preſence of
" her relations, drives her naked out of his houſe,
" and whips her through the village. Chaſtity once
" proſtituted, is never forgiven; nor to ſuch an one
" can the attractions of beauty, youth or riches pro-
" cure an huſband. Vice is not there made the ob-
" ject of wit and mirth; nor can the faſhion of the
" age be pleaded in excuſe either for being corrupt,
" or for endeavouring to corrupt others. . . . .
" Good cuſtoms and manners avail more among theſe
" barbarians, than good laws among a more refined
" people *."

Our own hiſtorical monuments confirm theſe teſtimonies. I have before obſerved, that their religion threatened the ſeducers of women with the ſevereſt torments of the next world. Adam of Bremen, in his voyage to Denmark obſerves, that adultery was there moſt ſtrictly puniſhed; and that the woman who was detected in it, was ſold on the ſpot. The law in Iceland was equally remarkable; for it not only denounced very ſevere puniſhments againſt rapes and adulteries, but proceeded farther; expreſsly prohibiting even kiſſing or ſecret embraces. Whoever kiſſed a woman againſt her own conſent, was con-

* Tacit. Germ. c. 18, 19

demned to exile ; and even with her confent, he was fined three marks of filver. Every degree of this crime was rated in the fame proportion. If a man abufed a free woman, he was punifhed with death ; and if one that had been freed, with banifhment ; if a flave, he was amerced three marks *. Among the Swedes and Danes, the hufband who caught his wife in the act of adultery, might immediately kill her, and caftrate the gallant. Saxo takes notice of the fame law, which he attributes to king Frotho †.

When the people of the North migrated into the fouthern parts of Europe, they carried along with their laws, a chaftity and referve, which excited univerfal furprize. Salvian, a prieft of Marfeilles in the 5th century, exclaims, " Let us blufh," fays he, " and be covered with a confufion which ought to " produce falutary effects. Wherever the Goths be- " come mafters, we fee no longer any diforders, ex- " cept among the old inhabitants. Our manners are " reformed under the dominion of Vandals. Behold " an incredible event ! an unheard-of prodigy ! Bar- " barians have by the feverity of their difcipline ren- " dered chafte the Romans themfelves : and the " Goths have purified thofe places which the others " had defiled by their debaucheries. A cruel na- " tion," adds he, " but worthy to be admired for " their

* Arngrim. Jon. Crymog. p. 89.

† Sax. Gram. lib. v.

"their continence *." These virtues were not there of long continuance; the climate soon warmed their frozen imaginations; their laws by degrees relaxed, and their manners still more than their laws.

A numerous offspring was commonly produced from these marriages; but neither the rich, nor the poor scrupled to expose such of their children as they did not chuse to bring up †. Both the Greeks and Romans were guilty of this barbarous practice, long before they can be said to have been corrupted by prosperity, luxury and the arts: So true is it that ignorance is no security from vice, and that men always know enough to invent crimes. It is no less remarkable, that a kind of infant baptism was practised in the North, long before the first dawning of Christianity had reached those parts. Snorro Sturleson, in his Chronicle, speaking of a Norwegian nobleman, who lived in the reign of Harald Harfagre, relates, that he poured water on the head of a new-born child, and called him HACON, from the name of his father ‡. Harald himself had been baptized in the same manner, and it is noted of king OLAVE TRYGGUESON, that his mother Astride had him thus baptized and named as soon as he was born. The Livonians observed the same ceremony; which also prevailed among the Germans, as appears from a letter which the famous Pope

* Salvian. lib. vii. de Gubern. Dei.

† Vid. Verel. Not. ad Hervor. cap. vi. p. 87.

‡ Vid. Snor. Sturlef. c. lx.

Pope Gregory the Third ſent to their apoſtle Boniface, directing him expreſsly how to act in this reſpect *. It is probable that all theſe people might intend by ſuch a rite to preſerve their children from the ſorceries and evil charms which wicked ſpirits might employ againſt them at the inſtant of their birth. Several nations of Aſia and America have attributed ſuch a power to ablutions of this kind; nor were the Romans without ſuch a cuſtom, though they did not wholly confine it to new-born infants †.

I ſhall not here repeat what I have ſaid above concerning the hardy way of bringing up children in the North. But I cannot omit mentioning the great advantages gained from it in reſpect to their health and bodily force. The Greek and Latin authors ſpeak with ſurprize of the ſize and ſtrength of the northern men. Cæſar obſerves of the Suevi, that they feed chiefly on milk, and exerciſe themſelves much in hunting, which together with the free unreſtrained life they lead, never being from their childhood impelled againſt their inclinations to any diſcipline or duty, he aſſigns as effective cauſes of their very large and robuſt make ‡. Vegetius expreſsly affirms, that the

* Vid. Epiſt. 122. apud Nic. Serar. in Epiſt. Sti. Bonifacii martyris.

† Vid. Keyſler. Antiq. Select. p. 313. who has a very learned Note on this ſubject, where he has collected together a number of curious paſſages from authors ancient and modern, Claſſic and Barbarous writers, relating to this practice. T.

‡ Bell. Gall. lib. iv. c. 1.

the tallneſs of the Germans gave them great advantage in combat over the leſſer Romans. The lances, ſwords and other arms which have been preſerved to this time, and may yet continue to more remote ages, are objects of curioſity and aſtoniſhment to thoſe whoſe anceſtors were able to wield them. But the greateſt proof of their prodigious ſtrength ariſes from the rude enormous monuments of architecture which were raiſed by theſe northern people. We have all heard of that monument on Saliſbury plain in England, where we ſee a multitude of vaſt ſtones of monſtrous weight ſet up end-wiſe, and ſerving as baſes to other ſtones, many of which are in length ſixteen feet. Nor are the monuments of this kind leſs aſtoniſhing, which we meet with in Iceland, in Weſtphalia, and particularly in Eaſt-Friezeland, Brunſwick, Mecklenburg, and many parts of the North *. The dark ignorance of ſucceeding ages not being able to comprehend how ſuch ſtupendous edifices could be conſtructed by mortals, have attributed them to demons and giants. But although the founders of theſe had not probably all the aſſiſtance we derive from the mechanic powers, yet great things might be accompliſhed by men of ſuch mighty force co-operating together.

* A deſcription of moſt of the monuments above-mentioned, with their figures engraven on copper-plates, may be ſeen in KEYSLER. Antiq. Select. Septen. Sect. i. cap. 1. (cui titulus *Deſcriptio monumenti Saliſburienſis, ſimiliumque quæ in Germania terriſque Arctois cernuntur.*) T.

gether *. The Americans, unaided by the engines we apply to theſe purpoſes, have raiſed up ſuch vaſt ſtones in building their temples, as we dare not undertake to remove †. One may, however, conceive that patience, united with ſtrength, might, by taking time, be able to move ſuch vaſt bodies from one place to another, and afterwards to ſet them up on end, by means of artificial banks, down the ſlopes of which they made them ſlide. It is without diſpute from ſuch proofs of the great ſize and ſtrength of the firſt inhabitants

* In an ancient Icelandic chronicle, mention is made of a Norwegian named FINBOG, celebrated for his ſtrength. One day, ſays the Author, he pulled up an enormous ſtone, that was deep fixed in the earth, he took two other great ſtones and placed them upon it, he carried them all three upon his belly for ſome minutes, and at length threw them from him with ſuch violence, that the greateſt of them remained buried a great way in the earth. (Vid. Chriſt. Worm. Diſſ. de Aræ Multiſc. vit. & ſcript. p. 172.)

A multitude of ſuch men uniting together, might be able to diſplace large and heavy fragments of rocks, and by means of the ſcaffolding they uſed, viz. artificial banks, &c. might be able to ſet them upright. *Firſt Edit.*

† See ACOSTA's Hiſt. of the Indies, lib. vi. cap. 14. This author, ſpeaking of the buildings and fortreſſes which the Incas had erected in Cuſco, and other places of Peru, ſays, " they uſed no mortar nor cement, neither had iron " nor ſteel to cut the ſtones with; " no engines or other inſtruments " to carry them; and yet they " were ſo artificially wrought, " that in many places the joints " are hardly ſeen :" and as for their ſize, he aſſures us he meaſured one of the ſtones himſelf, which was " 38 feet long, 18 feet broad, " and ſix thick. And in the wall " of the fortreſs of Cuſco there " are ſtones of a ſtill greater bigneſs." T.

inhabitants of the earth, that ancient hiſtory has generally painted them as giants. The atmoſphere, which was formerly more cold and bracing in Europe than it is now *, the continual exerciſes which men then perſiſted in, together with their continence, their avoiding an early commerce with the other ſex, their ſimple diet and ſavage life, in the fatigues of which the mind bore no part, were without doubt the cauſes which produced ſuch enormous animals; and will convince us, whenever the like circumſtances again occur, that Nature, ever young and inexhauſtible, will always produce the like effects.

To that wonderful conſtitutional vigour the Scandinavians were indebted for ſuch a long and healthy old age as many of them enjoyed: an advantage which they for the moſt part only regarded with indifference, and even with diſdain, though ſo highly valued by mankind ſince the acquiſition of arts, and the refinements of pleaſure have ſhortened the date, but rendered the journey of life more agreeable. In truth, few of them awaited the diſtant period allotted by nature; ſingle combats or general engagements, the dangers and fatigues of the ſea, together with the frequent practice of ſuicide, were ſo many paſſages ever open to conduct them to that glorious path which they thought led to a happy futurity. The influence which this doctrine had upon their minds, cannot be more particularly ſeen, than in the cuſtoms

* See on this ſubject the concluſion of next chapter.

cuſtoms obſerved in their laſt ſcene of life and funeral ceremonies. In the moſt early ages theſe were very ſimple. Before the arrival of Odin, the Scandinavians did nothing more than lay the dead body, together with his arms, under a little heap of earth and ſtones; but he introduced into the North new cuſtoms attended with more magnificence. In the ſucceeding ages, the Danes were wont to raiſe funeral piles, and reduce the bodies to aſhes; which were collected together into an urn, and depoſited under a little mount of earth. But this foreign cuſtom was never quite univerſal, and the old rite took place again, according to conjecture, within five or ſix hundred years. Theſe two funeral ceremonies have diſtinguiſhed two diſtinct æras in the ancient northern hiſtory. The firſt was called the AGE OF FIRE *, and the ſecond the AGE OF HILLS †; which laſt prevailed 'till Chriſtianity triumphed in the North.

When an hero or chief fell glorioufly in battle, his funeral obſequies were honoured with all poſſible magnificence. His arms, his gold and ſilver, his war-horſe, his domeſtic attendants, and whatever elſe he held moſt dear, were placed with him on the pile. His dependants and friends frequently made it a point of honour to die with their leader, in order to attend on his ſhade in the palace of Odin. And laſtly, his wife

* *Brenne-Alderen.*

† *Hog-Alderen:* That is, the Age of Little Hills, or BARROWS, as they are called in the ſouth-weſt parts of this iſland.

wife was generally consumed with him on the same pile. If the defunct, as was often the case, had more wives than one, the privilege of following her dead lord to his grave was claimed by her who had been his chief favourite during life. In this manner was Nanna consumed in the same fire with the body of her husband Balder, one of Odin's companions *. In the history of Olave Tryggueson, left us by an old Icelandic writer, we have a memorable passage relative to this strange custom: "Eric, king of Sweden, " (says this author,) put away his wife Segride on " account of her intolerably insolent and imperious " temper. But others assert that her dismission was " a voluntary act of her own, because she had learnt " that her husband had but ten years to live, and " that she should be obliged to be buried with him, " according to the usage of the country. For Eric " had made a vow during the heat of an engagement, " to put an end to his own life at the completion of " that space of time." This shews, that the Scandinavian women were not always willing to make so cruel and absurd a sacrifice to the manes of their husbands; the idea of which had been picked up by their Scythian ancestors, when they inhabited the warmer climates of Asia, where they had had their first abode. In some parts of the Indies this custom is still, and ever has been religiously observed. "The

* Vid. Edda Mythol. 43. et vid. etiam Hist. Norveg. Torf. passim. Olof. Trygguasons Saga, c. 2. et Keysler Antiq. Sel. p. 147.

" ſame lively imaginations, and the ſame delicate " nerves" (as the ſenſible author of the Spirit of Laws well remarks) " which inſpire the people of " theſe hot climates with the fear of death, make " them at the ſame time dread a thouſand things " worſe even than death itſelf." Although it was thus founded on a principle of religion, ſuch an abſurd cuſtom has long ſubſided in Europe. Cæſar obſerves, that this uſage had ceaſed in Gaul long before the Romans were acquainted with them *. The Germans, in the time of Tacitus, were content to give their departed friends their horſes to accompany them; and in all probability, if it had not been for the inſtitutions of Odin, theſe ſacrifices of the wives to the manes of their dead lords had been aboliſhed much earlier in Scandinavia.

Be that as it would: Nothing ſeemed to them more grand and noble than to enter the hall of Odin with a numerous retinue of ſlaves, friends and horſes, all in their fineſt armour and richeſt apparel. The princes and nobles never failed of ſuch attendants. His arms, and the bones of the horſe on which Chilperic I. ſuppoſed he ſhould be preſented to this warrior God, have been found in his tomb. They did in reality firmly believe, and Odin himſelf had aſſured them, that whatever was buried or conſumed with the dead, accompanied them to his palace. The poorer people, from the ſame perſuaſion, carried at leaſt their

* Cæſar de bell. Gall. lib. vi. c 19. Pomp. Mela, lib. iii. c. 8.

their moſt neceſſary utenſils and a little money, not to be entirely deſtitute in the other world. From a like motive, the Greeks and Romans put a piece of ſilver into the dead man's mouth, to pay his paſſage over the Styx. The Laplanders to this day provide their dead with a flint and every thing neceſſary for lighting them along the dark paſſage they have to traverſe after death. In whatever degree civilized nations reſemble the ſavage part of mankind, their ſtrongeſt features are thoſe which reſpect religion, death and a future ſtate. Men cannot contemplate theſe intereſting objects coolly, nor uninfluenced by ſuch hopes and fears as ſhackle and impede the proper exertion of their reaſoning faculties. Accordingly, all that the theology of the Egyptians, the Greeks and Romans, thoſe people in other reſpects ſo wiſe, taught them on many points, was only one great delirium, and was (if we conſider it impartially) in no reſpect ſuperior to that of the ancient Celts and Scandinavians; if indeed it was not more indecent and extravagant ſtill than theirs.

Odin was ſuppoſed to guard theſe rich depoſits from the ſacrilegious attempts of rapine by means of certain ſacred and wandering fires which played round the tombs. And for their better ſecurity, the law promulged its ſevereſt edicts againſt all offences of this kind. The nineteenth chapter of the Salic-law is full of the different puniſhments decreed againſt ſuch as ſhall carry off the boards or carpeting with which the ſepulchres were covered; and interdicts them

from

from fire and water. This law appears to have been well obferved in the North during the times of paganifm, fince in digging into old burial grounds there are now frequently found arms, fpurs, rings, and different kinds of vafes. Such were the contents of the tomb that was opened near Guben in Germany*. The perfon who had been interred there, feems to have been a lover of good chear; for he had carried with him feveral utenfils of cookery, together with flaggons and drinking veffels of all fizes. In the Britifh Ifles, in Germany, in Scandinavia, and in many countries in the northern and eaftern parts of Afia, are found monuments of the ancient inhabitants, in the form of little round hills, and often furrounded with ftones, on open plains, or near fome road. It is the received opinion that thefe are the burying places of giants, and indeed bones larger than the human fize are often found in them; but we muft remember, that as the ancients durft not approach the palace of Odin on foot, and for that reafon had their horfes buried with them, it is very probable that the bones of thefe animals are often miftaken for thofe of men.

* *Nimifchæ en pago uno milliari a Gubena diftante univerfus adparatus culinarius erutus, cacabi, ollæ, catini, phialæ, patinæ, urceoli, lagenulæ, &c.* Vide Keyfler. Antiq. Select. Septen. p. 173. T.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIII.

Sequel of the cuſtoms, arts and ſciences of the ancient Scandinavians.

THE arts which are neceſſary to the convenience of life, are but indifferently cultivated among a people, who neglect the more pleaſing and refined ones. The Scandinavians held them all equally in contempt: What little attention they beſtowed on any, was chiefly on ſuch as were ſubſervient to their darling paſſion. This contempt for the arts, which mens' deſire of juſtifying their own ſloth inſpires, received additional ſtrength from their ſanguinary religion, from their extravagant fondneſs for liberty, which could not brook a long confinement in the ſame place,

place, and especially from their rough, fiery and quarrelsome temper, which taught them to place all the happiness and glory of man in being able to brave his equals, and to repel insults.

As long as this inclination had its full sway among a people, who were perpetually migrating from one forest to another, and entirely maintained from the produce of their flocks and herds, they never thought of cultivating the soil. In the time of Tacitus, the Germans were little used to agriculture. "They "cultivate," says that historian, "sometimes one "part of the country, and sometimes another; and "then make a new division of the lands. They will "much easier be persuaded to attack, and reap wounds "from an enemy, than to till the ground and wait "the produce. They consider it as an indication of "effeminacy, and want of courage to gain by the "sweat of their brow, what they may acquire at the "price of their blood *." This prejudice gradually wore out, and they applied themselves more to agriculture. The great consumption of grain in a country, where the principal part of their food and their ordinary liquor was chiefly made of nothing else, could not but produce this effect. In the ninth and tenth centuries we see the free-men, the nobility and the men of great property, directing the operations of husbandry themselves †. At length Christianity having

* Tac. Germ. c. 14, &c.

† Vid. Arng. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. p. 52.

ing entirely extinguiſhed the taſte for piracy, and thus reſtored to the land one half of its inhabitants, laid them under a neceſſity of deriving from thence all their ſubſiſtence.

But the other arts were ſtill depreſſed under the influence of this prejudice, and were for a long time conſidered as abject occupations befitting none but ſlaves; which not only diſhonoured the preſent profeſſors, but even fixed a ſtain on all their poſterity *. The Gauls, the Germans, and the Scandinavians never employed in any of their domeſtic and handicraft trades other than ſlaves, freed-men, women or ſuch miſerable old men as preferred a diſhonourable life to death. They were of courſe ignorant of all the pleaſing conveniences and ornaments of life, excepting ſuch as they either acquired by violence in their piratical excurſions, or gained to themſelves by foreign ſervice. Their wives ſpun themſelves the wool which made one part of their cloathing, and ſkins ſupplied the reſt. Their habits ſat cloſe to their bodies, and were ſhort and neat like thoſe of all the 'Gothic †' nations:

* The Greeks and Romans did not think more philoſophically on this ſubject than theſe rude uncivilized nations: if indeed it can be called Philoſophy, and not rather Common Senſe, to eſtimate things in proportion to their utility, and to be ſenſible that we owe to the Arts moſt of the comforts we enjoy. *Firſt Edit.*

† (Celtic *Orig.*) In the habits of the ancient Gothic nations, we ſee evidently the rudiments of the modern European dreſs: They conſiſted of a kind of waiſtcoat, and breeches, or rather a kind of trowſers

nations: not wide, long and flowing like thofe of the Sarmatians and eaftern people. They were perhaps ftill lefs luxurious in their manner of lodging.

In the time of Tacitus, the Germans had not yet built themfelves cities, or even towns: "Every one," fays that author, "places his houfe on whatever fpot "he choofes, near a fpring, a wood or open field, "at a diftance from any neighbour, either from igno-"rance in the art of building, or for fear of fire *." When religion permitted temples to be erected to the Gods, the concourfe of thofe who came to offer oblations, engaged them to build round about them, and towns infenfibly arofe. The fame thing happened near the caftles of their kings, princes and great men; and laftly, the markets, whither the peafants repaired for the mutual exchange of thofe few commodities in which the trade of thefe days confifted, gave birth to a third kind of towns, which ftill in their names bear evident traces of their original †. The houfes of which thefe towns confifted were nothing better, for the moft part, than cottages fupported by thick heavy pofts joined together by boards, and covered with turf,

trowfers which came down to the feet, and were connected with the fhoes; whereas the ancient Romans were naked knee'd. Upon the pillars of Trajan and Antonine, the dreffes of fuch nations as were of Gothic race bear a great refemblance to thofe of our common failors and peafants. T.

* Tac. Germ. c. 16.

† The general termination of thefe is *Koping*, i. e. Market.

turf*. The very loweſt rank of people were not e-ven ſo well off; having no other defence from the ſe-verity of the winter, but only miſerable huts, ditches or clefts in the rocks. There lying on the bare ground, half covered with a few ſkins tacked toge-ther with thorns, they paſſed their time in a kind of drowſy torpor, (happy, if it be poſſible to be ſo by the mere privation of misfortunes,) till rouſed by ſome call of war, all this ferocious and ſavage youth ruſhed from their caverns to go to ſet fire to the pa-laces of Rome, and to trample under foot all the fine monuments of luxury, induſtry and arts. But I a-gain repeat it, that it was only a ſmall part of this people who lived ſo totally ignorant of the convenien-ces of life. Their grandees were early diſtinguiſhed by edifices ſumptuous for thoſe times. Their chief ambition was to have them of vaſt extent, and adorn-ed with very lofty towers. The moſt wealthy of thoſe Norwegian lords who ſettled in Iceland built there houſes of monſtrous greatneſs. Arngrim † aſ-ſures us, that Ingulph's palace was 135 feet in length; and mentions others not inferior to it; but it is very likely that theſe were only a kind of cover-ed incloſures which took in both their ſlaves and cat-

* In theſe buildings the light for the moſt part was only receiv-ed from the top; whether it was that the uſe of windows was then unknown, or regarded by the ſa-ges of the country as a dangerous luxury. Vid. Arngr. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. c. 6. *Firſt Edit.*

† Vid. Crymog. p. 57.

tle. The moſt valuable ornaments of their palaces were the cielings, on which were repreſented in ſculpture the memorable actions of the poſſeſſor or his anceſtors. Fragments of theſe are ſtill found in Iceland, which appear to have been done eight hundred years ago, and contribute to throw light on the hiſtory of the country. Nor is this ſculpture ſo bad as might be expected. The mountaineers of Norway and Sweden have to this day a remarkable dexterity at carving with the knife, and in the cabinets of the curious are preſerved many pieces which ſurprizingly ſhew how far genius can advance unaſſiſted by art *. Such of the Scandinavians as ſettled in richer countries, ſoon adopted the luxury of their new fellow-citizens, and were as deſirous as they of diſtinguiſhing themſelves by ſumptuous buildings. But although they had ſtill before their eyes thoſe fine monuments which the envious hand of time has denied to us, yet the beautiful and noble ſimplicity of the antique proportions eſcaped them; they disfigured them by that affectation of exceſſive ornament, from whence ſprang the Gothic ſtile of architecture, ſo called from this people, which ſo long prevailed thro' all Europe, and produced ſo many edifices wherein we can find nothing to admire but the inexhauſtible patience and infinite pains of thoſe who built them.

We may judge from the foregoing pages of the ſtate of

* Vid. Pontoppid. Hiſt. Nat. Norv. tom. ii. c. 10.

of commerce in ancient Scandinavia. It is true, the fondneſs of the inhabitants for navigation ought to have been favourable to it ; but we know that piracy, which is the reſult of idleneſs in thoſe who practiſe it, reduces to idleneſs thoſe who ſuffer by it, as it renders all induſtry uſeleſs. We muſt not, however, ſuppoſe, that this people carried on no kind of traffic. I think one may diſcover ſome views of this ſort in thoſe maritime expeditions of the Norwegians which have been related above : and this conjecture ſeems to be confirmed by the great quantity of foreign money which is ſtill found in different parts of the North ; if indeed theſe are not rather reliques of the plunder collected by theſe ravagers. It is probable, that for a long time commerce was carried on by means of this foreign coin, in thoſe parts where they had a ſufficient quantity of it, and in other places by an exchange of commodities. We do not find that there was any money coined in the three northern kingdoms before the tenth or at moſt the ninth century ; and there is reaſon to believe, it was Canute the Great who firſt brought over Engliſhmen for the purpoſe of coining thoſe little pieces of copper money which are ſtill ſhewn, and are generally impreſſed with the figure of a croſs, the ſun, or a ſtar, without any letters or inſcription. Under the pagan princes, money was alſo much in uſe as the common medium of value, but it ſeems to have only paſſed by weight.

We

We may readily ſuppoſe that the Scandinavians ſtudied aſtronomy. A ſcience ſo requiſite for ſailors could not but make a great part of the education of a people who aſpired to fame by maritime enterprizes. The ancient chronicles frequently preſent us with young warriors endeavouring to acquire the good opinion of their miſtreſſes by boaſting of their accompliſhments, ſuch as their ſkill at cheſs, their dexterity in ſwimming and ſkating, their talents in poetry, and their knowing all the ſtars by their names. Theſe names had nothing in common with thoſe adopted by the Greeks and Romans; and were often founded on reaſons as fantaſtical as theirs. Thus they called *Urſa Major* the GREAT DOG, and the leſſer Bear CHARLES'S WAIN: 'The three ſtars in the belt of Orion, FRIGGA'S DISTAFF; the Swan, THE CROSS; the Milky-way, the ROAD OF WINTER, &c. But whether they only applied their knowledge of aſtronomy to conduct them in their voyages, or endeavoured, like the reſt of the world, to read their deſtiny in the ſtars, is a matter I am not able to decide. Their curious prying into future events by other means equally ridiculous, will not allow them to claim any merit from either their ignorance or neglect of judicial aſtrology. All we can ſay with certainty is, that they have at all times beſtowed great care and attention in regulating the courſe of time; whether their religion, which preſcribed them certain periodical ſacrifices, rendered that care neceſſary; or whether it proceeded from that peculiar turn which the northern people

have

have ever ſhewn for calculation and numbers *. Their year commonly commenced at the winter-ſolſtice, and they divided it into two half years, or intervals between the two ſolſtices †, which were again divided into quarters and months. There was great variety in the names of theſe months, which were borrowed generally from the rural occupations to be performed in each of them, or from the religious ceremonies which were then to be obſerved; theſe names are ſtill in uſe in many places of the North ‡. The months were

* It is remarkable that the Scandinavians numbered the units up to Twelve, without ſtopping at Ten like all other nations. This manner of counting is preferable to ours, as Twelve is a more perfect number, and more eaſily broken into fractions, than Ten. The Icelanders and the peaſants of certain provinces in Sweden, retain to this day a method of reckoning by Great Hundreds and Little Hundreds, Great Thouſands and Little Thouſands: But they ſeem to have confounded their ancient manner of computation with the modern, ſince they make their Great Hundred to conſiſt of 10 times 12, or 120, and their Great Thouſand of 1200, inſtead of multiplying regularly 12 by 12. (Vid. Dal. Su. Rik. Hiſt. tom. i. p 245. et Arngr. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. p. 85.) *Firſt Edit.*

The ſame method of reckoning by the Great and Little Hundred ſtill prevails among our Engliſh farmers, in their ſale of cheeſe, &c. Their Great Hundred is 120 lb. their Little Hundred 112 lb. T.

† That is, by Summer and Winter, as we in our ordinary converſation do in England. T.

‡ Vid. Ol. Worm. Faſt. Danic. paſſim.

Dr. Hickes, in his valuable *Theſaurus Ling. Septentrion.* has given a curious liſt of the names of the months in all the northern languages, including thoſe of our Anglo-Saxon anceſtors. In all theſe languages they are very ſignificant, as

were divided into weeks of feven days, a divifion which hath prevailed among all the northern nations we have any knowledge of, from the extremity of Afia to that of Europe. The day was divided into twelve parts, to each of which they affigned a diftinct name: but in their computation of time, they made ufe of the word NIGHT inftead of DAY. Tacitus obferves the fame thing of the Germans *; and the Englifh have ftill, on fome occafions, the fame mode of fpeaking †. The longeft night of winter was confidered in the North, as that which had produced all the reft as well as the days; hence they termed it the MOTHER-NIGHT ‡, and were perfuaded that on fuch a night the world was created. This notion certainly gave birth to the mode of expreffion above-related.

The

as the reader will judge from thofe of the Icelandic: In this, JANUARY was called *Midfuetrar-manudr*, the mid-winter month. FEBRUARY, *Foftensgangs-manudr*, the fafting-proceffion month. MARCH, *Jaffadegra manudr*, the month of equal day and night. MAY, *Fardaga-manudr*, the month of fair days. JUNE, *Nottleyfa-manudr*, the night-lefs month. JULY, *Madka-manudr*, the infect month. AUGUST, *Heyanna-manudr*, the hay-making month. SEPTEMBER, *Addraata-manudr*, ... OCTOBER, *Slatrunar-manudr*, the flaughter-month. NOVEMBER *Rydtrydar-manudr*, ... DECEMBER, *Skamdeiges-manudr*, the month of fhort days. Vid. Hickes Gram. Mæfo-Goth. p. 215, 216. T.

* *Nec dierum numerum ut nos, fed* NOCTIUM *computant. Sic conftituunt, fic condicunt, nox ducere diem videtur.* Tacit. Germ. c. 11.

† Thus we fay SEVEN-NIGHT, (not Seven Days,) and FORTNIGHT, *i. e.* Fourteen Nights, (not Fourteen Days.) T.

‡ See above, Chap. VII, p. 130.

The neceſſity of aſſiſting the memory, led them early to invent a kind of Calendars, which they called RUNIC STAFFS. Theſe were a ſort of compendious almanacks marked out by lines upon ſhort pieces of board, or ſmooth ſticks *. Some of them bear the appearance of great antiquity, but I believe there are none which do not carry evident marks that their owners were Chriſtians. The Pagans, however, may have had inſtruments of this kind; which the firſt princes converted to Chriſtianity might alter and adapt to the Chriſtian rites. The Runic characters with which they are always inſcribed, together with ſome other marks of paganiſm, ſeem to prove this: But the queſtion cannot poſitively be decided 'till we have examined whether the Scandinavians were acquainted with the uſe of letters before they had embraced Chriſtianity. This is a fruitful queſtion which deſerves particular diſcuſſion.

One cannot travel far in Denmark, Norway or Sweden, without meeting with great ſtones of different forms, engraven with thoſe ancient characters called RUNIC †, which appear at firſt ſight extremely different

* They were called in the North *Rim-ſtocks*, and *Prim-ſtaffs*: they exhibited by different lines and marks, the Faſts and Feſtivals, the Golden Number, Dominical Letter, Epact, &c. T.

† Runic inſcriptions are alſo found in this iſland: See a deſcription of a very curious one in Cumberland, and of another in Scotland, in Hickes's Theſaur. Ling. Sept. (*Gram. Iſland.*) Tab. VI.

different from all we know. The few who have endeavoured to decipher them, have diſcovered that theſe inſcriptions are, for the moſt part, only epitaphs, written in a language not leſs obſolete than the characters *. Several of them were undoubtedly written in Pagan times: but as a great part of them bear evident marks of Chriſtianity; ſome learned men of diſtinction have thought that the Germans and Scandinavian miſſionaries firſt inſtructed their converts in the art of writing. The favourers of this opinion alledge ſeveral proofs in ſupport of it, which deſerve ſome attention.

They produce the teſtimony of ſeveral Greek and Latin authors to invalidate what the northern literati have aſſerted concerning the great antiquity of the RUNIC character. Androtion, quoted by Elian †, aſſures us, that " neither the Thracians, nor any other " of the barbarous people ſettled in Europe, make " uſe

VI. & p 5.) See alſo Gordon's Itinerarium Septentrionale, p. 168. There is even extant a coin of king OFFA with a Runic inſcription; whence it ſhould ſeem that this character had been originally uſed by the Saxons, as well as their Scandinavian brethren. T.

* The manner in which our author ſpeaks of the Runic inſcriptions, ſhews him but little acquainted with this part of his ſubject: the Runic characters are not difficult to read, to thoſe who are moderately converſant in northern antiquities; and the language of them is no other than the ancient Icelandic, in which there are innumerable books extant in the libraries of the North. Almoſt all the Runic inſcriptions found in the North have been publiſhed in one collection or other. T.

† Ælian. Var. Hiſt. lib. viii. c. 6. Vid. Pelloutier Hiſt. des Celtes, tom. i. ch. 10.

" uſe of letters; looking upon it as ſomewhat diſho-
" nourable to employ them: whereas the uſe of them
" is common among the barbarians of Aſia." Tacitus is more expreſs on this head. "Both the men
" and the women," ſays he, ſpeaking of the Germans,
" are equally ignorant of the ſecret of writing let-
" ters *." Almoſt all the ancients who ſpeak of the Celts, affirm the ſame thing. They aſſure us, that theſe people held in contempt every occupation, except that of arms; That learning to read and write degraded a perſon in their eyes; That their DRUIDS or prieſts, induced either by intereſt or ſuperſtition, and probably by both, utterly forbade them the uſe of letters, and encouraged them in the averſion they entertained for this admirable ſecret; and that theſe Druids pretended their doctrines ought to be reſerved for the initiated only, and concealed from all others, which could not have been, had they committed them to an indiſcreet paper. They confirm all theſe authorities by divers facts. Thus Theodoric king of Italy could not ſo much as ſign the firſt letters of his name, though he had ſpent his youth among the Romans. Eginhard, in his life of Charlemagne, ſays, that this emperor, though in other reſpects not unlearned, could not write, and that there were entire nations in Germany ſubject to him, whoſe laws were not yet committed to writing. The Saxons under Louis le

 Debonnair,

* *Litterarum ſecreta viri pariter ac fœminæ ignorant.* Tac. Germ. c. 19.

Debonnair, perſiſting in their reſolution of not learning to read, he was obliged to have the Old and New Teſtament turned into verſe, which they willingly learned by heart, and ſung after their own manner. Laſtly, the literati, whoſe ſentiments we here give, think they can unravel all the difficulty ariſing from the particular form of the Runic characters, and prove that theſe were not known in the North before Chriſtianity, by reducing them to the Roman letters; from which, ſay they, theſe do not differ any farther than this, that the people of the North having been obliged at firſt to engrave them in wood and ſtone, found it convenient to draw their letters chiefly in ſtrait lines, and to avoid as much as poſſible all round ſtrokes and turnings *.

Theſe

* The word RUNE ſeems to come from a word in the ancient Gothic language, ſignifying TO CUT. [So ſays our author; but Wormius, who was a much greater maſter of this ſubject, derives RUNE from either *Ryn* a FURROW, or *Ren* a GUTTER or CHANNEL. As theſe characters were firſt cut in wood or ſtone, the reſemblance to a furrow or channel would eaſily ſuggeſt the appellation. Vid. Worm. Lit. Run. p. 2. 1636, 4to. T.]

The word *Bog Stav*, or *Buch Stab*, which is uſed in Germany and the North to ſignify a letter, is doubtleſs derived from *Bog* or *Buch*, a Beech-tree, of which wood they originally made their writing tables, and from *Stav* or *Stab*, a ſtaff or ſtick, becauſe moſt of the letters were drawn in perpendicular lines, as it were "ſticks or "ſtaffs ſet upright." Vid Worm. Lit. Run. p. 6. From the ſame *Bog* or *Buch* the beſt etymologiſts derive the word BOK or BOOK, which ſignifies a Volume not only in ours, but in all the Gothic or Teutonic languages. T.

These arguments are fpecious, but are they equally folid? It is true the ancients denied that the Celts in general had the knowledge, or at leaft the ufe of letters among them; but our prefent enquiry only regards the Scandinavians, and fuch of the Germans as lived neareft them. Thefe are the only people among whom the Runic characters are found, and with them the ancients were leaft acquainted. As for Tacitus, he has probably been mifunderftood; thofe who are acquainted with his ftile and manner, if they re-confider the paffage, will not doubt but this is his meaning, that " both the German men and women were " ignorant of the fecret of writing letters or epiftles," that is, with a view to carry on an intrigue *. What they relate of the Druids chiefly refpects the Celti of Gaul, nor is it equally applicable to the other northern people. We may eafily fuppofe there were among them many warriors and illuftrious men who could not write, without concluding from thence that the whole nation was equally ignorant. As for the laft argument which attributes to the firft miffionaries the honour of introducing letters into the North; it does not appear to me to carry much weight. The Runic characters might poffibly be borrowed from the Roman alphabet, without any neceffary conclufion that the Scandinavians had waited for the fecret till the introduction of Chriftianity among them. The Runic letters

* So the beft tranflators of Tacitus, and fo the Abbé BLETTERIE has rendered this paffage in his celebrated French verfion.

letters might even have a great refemblance to the Roman without being copied from them, fince both may have been derived from one common original. But the ftrongeft argument of all is, that this refemblance has been nothing lefs than proved; for that the difference between the RUNIC and ROMAN letters is all owing to the neceffity of writing on wood or ftone, and of tracing the letters in perpendicular lines, leaves fuch a latitude for changing, adding or diminifhing, that there are few alphabets in the world, which by means of fuch a commodious hypothefis, might not eafily be reduced to the Roman character. Accordingly the learned Wormius found the Runic letters as eafily reducible to the Greek and Hebrew alphabets as to the Roman *.

We have hitherto only propofed doubts: Let us now fee if we can afcertain fome truths. The Roman hiftory tells us, that under the reign of the Emperor Valens, ULPHILAS †, bifhop of thofe Goths who were fettled

* Vid. Ol. Worm. Literatur. Runic. paffim.——[M. Pelloutier cites in the firft volume of his Hift. des Celtes, a manufcript Differtation, the author of which (Mr CELSIUS, a learned Swede) hath reduced the RUNIC to ROMAN characters. I have read this Differtation very carefully: it contains many ingenious conjectures, but they appear to me to be nothing but conjectures. *Firft Edit.*]

It was that great mafter of northern literature, Dr. HICKES, who firft ftarted the notion that the Runic character was borrowed from the Roman: See his *Thefaurus Linguar. Septentrion.* &c. But this opinion is now generally given up as unfupportable. T.

† In the year 369. Vid. Socrat. Hift. Ecclef. lib. iv. and Sozomen. lib. vi. 36.

In the following account of UL-

PHILAS

settled in Mœsia and Thrace, translated the Bible into the Gothic language. But we know from other authorities,

PHILAS and the GOTHIC letters, our ingenious author has committed several mistakes; occasioned by his too closely following WORMIUS in his *Literatur. Run.* not considering that since the time of Wormius some very important discoveries have been made, and great light thrown upon this subject.

When WORMIUS wrote, the translation of Ulphilas was supposed to be irrecoverably lost, and therefore Wormius having nothing to guide him but conjecture, supposed the Runic character and that of Ulphilas to be the same.—But some years after, there was found in the abbey of Werden in Westphalia, a very curious fragment of what is believed to have been the identical version of ULPHILAS; written in the language of the Moeso-Goths, and exhibiting the characters which that prelate made use of: These are so very remote from the Runic, that we may now safely allow the Gothic Bishop the honour of their invention, without in the least derogating from the antiquity of the Runic letters. This fragment is now preserved in the library at UPSAL in Sweden, and is famous among all the northern literati, under the name of the *Codex argenteus*, or Silver Book: for which reason a short account of it may not be unacceptable.

The *Codex argenteus* contains at present only the four Gospels, though somewhat mutilated; and is believed to be a relic of the Gothic Bible, all or the greater part of which Ulphilas had translated. The leaves are of vellum of a violet colour; all the letters are of silver, except the initials, which are of gold. These letters (which are all capitals) appear not to have been written with the pen, but stamped or imprinted on the vellum with hot metal types *, in the same manner as the book-binders at present letter the backs of books. This copy is judged to be near as ancient as the time of Ulphilas, or at

* See this fully proved in some curious Tracts written by the learned *Dom.* JOHAN. IHRE, NATH. THENSTADT, G. F. EUPELIUS, and other Swedish Literati.

thorities, that the character in which this verfion was written, was either Runic, or one nearly refembling it. Several authors fay, that Ulphilas invented it; but

at leaft not later than a century or two after; yet fo near was the copyift to the difcovery of printing, that if he had but thought of combining three or four of thefe letters together, he muft have hit upon that admirable invention; whereas he only imprinted each letter fingly*.—This curious fragment has been feveral times printed in 4to, firft by Junius in 1665; and lately in a very elegant manner at Oxford by the learned Mr Lye in 1750. Another fragment of this curious verfion (containing part of the Epiftle to the Romans) has been fince difcovered in the library at Wolfenbottle, and was publifhed a few years ago in a very fplendid volume in 4to by the Rev. F. A. Knitell, arch-deacon of Wolfenbottle.

It muft not be concealed that Mr Michaelis, and one or two other learned men † have oppofed the current opinion, that the Silver Book contains part of Ulphilas's Gothic verfion; and have offered arguments to prove that it is rather a venerable fragment of fome very ancient Francic Bible: but they have been confuted by M. Knitell and others; and the Gothic claim has been further confirmed by a curious relic of the fame language lately difcovered in Italy, plainly written by one of the fame Goths, being evidently of their time. The explanation of this we owe to the reverend Mr Lye: See his Notes on the Gothic Gofpels, &c.

To conclude: The letters ufed in the Gothic Gofpels, being 25 in number, are formed with flight variations from the capitals of the Greek and Latin alphabet, and are extremely different from the Runic. The invention of them may therefore be very fafely attributed to Bifhop Ulphilas (as the ancients exprefsly affert,) who might not chufe to employ in fo facred a work as the tranflation of the Bible, the Runic characters, which the Goths had rendered infamous by their fuperftitious ufe of them. T.

* Mr Coxe, however, is of opinion that the letters are "drawn or painted." See Travels into Sweden. *Ed. of this Edit.*

† See Chamberlayn's "*Oratio Dominica, &c.*" Amft. 1714. 4to.

but is it probable that any man ſhould form a new alphabet for a nation which had one already? If the Goths of Mœſia and Thrace had not before his time had any knowledge of letters, would it not have been better to have taught them the uſe of the Greek character, already underſtood? Beſides, Ulphilas neither wrote the Goſpels on wood nor on ſtone, but on parchment; he would not therefore be under the neceſſity of disfiguring the alphabet of other nations for the ſake of ſtrait lines, which it is alledged gave birth to the Runic letters. At moſt it could not be the Roman alphabet that was altered; but if any, it muſt have been the Greek, for Ulphilas was at that time in a country where the Greek language was ſpoken. Nor is it difficult to diſcover what it was that led hiſtorians into the miſtake of ſuppoſing Ulphilas to have been the inventor of theſe characters. The Greeks had probably never heard any mention of them before he came among them: The introducer of a novelty eaſily paſſes for the author of it; and when we compare the Runic letters, taken from the inſcriptions ſcattered up and down on the rocks in the North, with the alphabet of Ulphilas, it is eaſy to ſee that the biſhop has added diverſe characters unknown to the ancient Scandinavians. It was doubtleſs the tranſlation of the Bible which obliged him to make theſe additions. The ancient alphabet being compoſed only of ſixteen letters *, could not expreſs many ſounds

* Verel. Runogr. Scand. cap. vii.

founds foreign to the Gothic language, that neceſſarily occurred in that work. Theſe additional letters might eaſily confer on Ulphilas the credit of inventing the whole. This is one of thoſe inaccuracies which every day happen. It is no leſs probable that before Ulphilas, the Goths, even while they were involved in the thickeſt darkneſs of paganiſm, had ſome knowledge of letters *.

What are we to think of thoſe inſcriptions in the Runic character, which travellers aſſure us they have ſeen in the deſarts of Tartary †? Tartary has never yet been converted to Chriſtianity; from this and the circumjacent countries iſſued thoſe ſwarms which peopled Scandinavia; nor have the Scandinavians ever made any expedition into their mother country ſince they embraced the Chriſtian faith. If then the account given us by theſe travellers is true, we muſt neceſſarily conclude that the Runic writing was an art which had its riſe in Aſia, and was carried into Europe by the colonies who came to ſettle in the North. This is alſo confirmed by all the old chronicles

* An evident proof that the Runic were not imitated from the Roman letters, ariſes not only from their form which have ſo little reſemblance to theſe, but from their number, (being but ſixteen,) and their order and names, which have nothing in common with the ROMAN, GREEK, or GOTHIC characters of Ulphilas. *See the plate.*

† Conſult Strahlemberg's Deſcription of the northern and eaſtern parts of Europe and Aſia, [quoted by Er. Benzel. Jun. in Pericul. Runic. Diſſ. Upſal. 1724.] See alſo in the ſame book the map of Tartary. *Firſt Edit.*

cles and poems which I have fo often quoted. They univerfally agree in affigning to the Runic characters a very remote antiquity, and an origin entirely pagan. They attribute the invention of them to Odin himfelf; who, they add, was eminently fkilled in the art of writing as well for the common purpofes of life, as for the operations of magic *. Many of thefe letters even bore the names of the Gods his companions. In a very ancient ode, quoted by Bartholin, the poet thus fpeaks of the Runic characters †: "The "letters which the Great Ancient traced out: which "the Gods compofed: which Odin the fovereign of "the Gods engraved." Had it been otherwife, how could the pagans have fo foon forgotten that thefe letters were introduced among them by the minifters of a religion that was foreign, unknown, and muft have been hateful to them, fince they were often compelled by violent means to profefs it? How could all their poets (who were at the fame time their theologians) fo exprefsly call Odin, "The inventor of the RUNES?" But laftly, what appears to be of great weight, is, that our hiftories often make mention of princes and pagan heroes who made ufe of this character in an age when, in all probability, Chriftianity had not penetrated fo far into the North ‡. In Blekingia, a

 province

* Edda Ifland. et Barthol p. 649.

† Vid. Barthol. de Caufis cont. mort. p. 647.

‡ Venantius Fortunatus, a Latin poet, who wrote about the beginning

province of Sweden, there is a road cut through a rock, on which are various Runic characters, ſaid to have been engraved there by king HAROLD HYLDETAND in honour of his father. Saxo, who lived under Valdemar II. * relates, that this prince ſent people thither to examine them, and that tradition attributed them to that king Harold who, according to Torfæus, aſcended the throne about the beginning of the ſeventh century. The ſame author aſſures us that Regner Lodbrog uſed Runic letters to record his exploits in Biarmland †. Inſtances of the ſame kind are found in almoſt every page of the ancient chronicles, and of Torfæus's hiſtory of Norway.

We may then fairly conclude, that it was Odin himſelf that introduced the Runic characters into the North. Almoſt all the Aſiatic nations had long before his time been acquainted with letters, and this prince's native country could not be far diſtant from many of thoſe people among whom they had been long

ginning of the ſixth century, ſpeaks even then of the Runic characters in one of his epigrams addreſſed to Flavius. Lib. vii. Epig. 18.

Barbara fraxineis pingatur RUNA *tabellis*
Quodque Papyrus agit Virgula plana valet.

i. e. The Barbarians engrave their Runic characters on aſhen tablets, which ſerve them inſtead of paper. Vid. Wormii Literat. Runic. p. 7.

* He reigned from A. D. 1202, to A. D. 1241. See Sax. Gram. in Præfat. and the Notes of Steph. Stephan. on that paſſage.

† A province in the north part of Ruſſia. Vid. Sax. Grammat. lib. ix.

long familiar. Nor is it improbable but that an ambitious leader might avail himſelf of them, to acquire reſpect from the rude uncivilized inhabitants of Scandinavia. The art of writing being of ſuch infinite and wonderful uſe, might eaſily perſuade them that there was ſomething divine or magical in it. Accordingly we ſee them more frequently employ it for the fooliſh purpoſe of working prodigies, than to aſſiſt the memory and render words fixed and permanent.

This would be the place to ſay ſomething of thoſe ſuperſtitious practices, if we had not already given ſufficient inſtances of the weakneſs of the human mind, and of the ſtrange errors and extravagances to which ignorant nations are ſubject. Let it ſuffice then juſt to obſerve, that the Runic characters were diſtinguiſhed into various kinds *. The NOXIOUS, or as they called them, the BITTER RUNES, were employed to bring various evils on their enemies: the FAVOURABLE averted misfortunes: the VICTORIOUS procured conqueſt to thoſe who uſed them: the MEDICINAL were inſcribed on the leaves of trees for healing: others ſerved to diſpel melancholy thoughts; to prevent ſhipwreck: were antidotes againſt poiſon; preſervatives againſt the reſentment of their enemies, and efficacious to render a miſtreſs favourable: Theſe laſt were to be uſed with great caution. If an ignorant perſon had chanced to write one letter for another, or had

* Vid. Worm. Litterat. Runic. p. 33. et Barthol. de Cauſ. &c. p. 650.

had but erred in the minuteſt ſtroke, he would have expoſed his miſtreſs to ſome dangerous illneſs; which was only to be cured by writing other RUNES with the greateſt niceneſs. All theſe various kinds differed only in the ceremonies obſerved in writing them, in the materials on which they were written, in the place where they were expoſed, in the manner in which the lines were drawn, whether in the form of a circle, of a ſerpent, or a triangle, &c. In the ſtrict obſervance of theſe childiſh particulars conſiſted that obſcure and ridiculous art, which acquired to ſo many weak and wicked perſons, the reſpectable name of Prieſts and Propheteſſes, merely for filling rude minds with jealouſy, fear and hatred *.

However,

* It is by miſchievous errors of the ſame kind that all nations have been diſtinguiſhed in their firſt ages of ſimplicity and ignorance; thoſe firſt ages which prejudice makes us regret, and wiſh that the arts had never corrupted their primeval innocence. Whereas in proportion as the empire of the Sciences hath prevailed in the North, that of Superſtition hath faded and vaniſhed before its growing light. But the extremity of Scandinavia, where that light hath not yet penetrated, ſtill remains faithfully ſubject to all its ancient errors. Allowing for the difference of their climate and poverty, the Laplanders at preſent are in this reſpect what the Scandinavians were formerly. With the ſame ignorance, they are equally ſubject to ſuperſtition and credulity; for it is a certain rule that Magic never fails to work prodigies in all ſuch nations as believe in it. The Oſtiacs and other ſavages of Aſia are no leſs given to ſorcery and witchcraft than the Laplanders; and we have all heard of the JONGLEURS, thoſe magicians ſo revered among the Barbarians of America. *Firſt Edit.*

However, the uſe of letters for more rational purpoſes became by degrees more common in the North. In the latter ages of paganiſm, we frequently meet with princes and famous leaders, and in general all perſons whoſe rank entitled them to a careful education, writing epiſtles, epitaphs and inſcriptions of various kinds *. The older theſe inſcriptions are, the better they are engraven. We rarely find them written from the right hand to the left †: but it is not uncommon to meet with the line running from the top to the bottom after the manner of the Chineſe and ſeveral nations of India; or from the top to the bottom, and then turning round to the left, and ſo up again to the place it begins at; or elſe from the left to the right, and ſo back to the left again, which was the manner of the early Greeks, and had its name from the reſemblance to a furrow traced by the plough ‡. The greater part of the ancient monuments written in the Runic character, which are ſtill preſerved, are inſcriptions diſperſed here and there in the fields §, and cut out on large ſtones or pieces of rock. The Scandinavians wrote alſo on wood, on the bark of the birch-tree, and on prepared ſkins. When they had occaſion to impart any matter to an abſent perſon, they diſpatched a meſſenger with a bit of bark, or a ſmall

* Vid. Ver. Runograph. Scand. p. 21.

† Vid. Worm. Litterar. Run. cap. xxv.

‡ Βουςροφηδον.

§ They are alſo often found in churches, and ſometimes in other buildings. T.

ſmall poliſhed piece of wood, on which they commonly expreſſed their meaning with much exactneſs. There are ſtill extant ſome of theſe epiſtles, and even love-letters written on theſe pieces of bark and bits of wood *. As for books compoſed in the Runic character, the moſt ancient we can find, appear to have been written about the time that Chriſtianity took place in the North, as is judged from ſeveral proofs, particularly from the frequent intermixture of Roman letters in them. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Runic gave way ſtill more and more to the other. Till at length the miſſionaries ſucceeded in totally aboliſhing the uſe of them, as tending to retain the people in their ancient ſuperſtitions. But this reformation did not ſpeedily take place, and there remained traces of this character for many ſucceeding ages; nor, as we are aſſured †, is it yet wholly laid aſide among the mountaineers of one province in Sweden.

I ſhall avoid entering into the diſputes which have been

* Renhielm, a learned Swede, in his Notes upon the Icelandic chronicle, intitled "Torſtein's Wik Saga," p. 35, cites an ancient billet-doux, containing only theſe words, "I ſhould love better, young "maid, to repoſe on thy boſom, "than to poſſeſs the riches of the "three Indies," Olaus Wormius alſo tells us, that he had one in his cabinet of curioſities which was writ upon little tables of wood, but he hath not thought proper to tranſlate it. *Firſt Edit.*

† See Dalin. Su Rik. hiſt. tom. i. p. 237. and Benzel. collect. hiſt. p. i. cap. 1.

been raiſed on the ſubject of the ancient northern tongues: For, however the reſearch may have been heretofore carried on with much gravity, it was in reality very trifling *, nor is it a trifle of that kind which ſerves to intereſt or amuſe the world at preſent. Let it ſuffice to remark, that from the reſult of the whole, it appears, that all Europe at firſt ſpoke the ſame language, excepting the SARMATIANS, who from the earlieſt time had one peculiar to themſelves; [*the* IBERI or CANTABRI, *progenitors of the Hiberni and Cambri;*] the GREEKS who borrowed many of their terms from Egypt and the Eaſt; and the ROMANS who in part adopted the language of Greece. This ancient language of the northern and weſtern parts of Europe has only been preſerved in thoſe countries, which the Romans never conquered; although evident traces of it are ſtill viſible in others that were long ſubject to their dominion. The Spaniſh and French tongues abound with words which we find ſtill extant in the Teutonic; ſome of them, ſuch as the Romans could not obliterate, and many others introduced by the frequent migrations from the North. . . . That tongue is ſtill ſpoken in Iceland and in ſome mountainous provinces of Sweden. The Daniſh, the Norwegian, and the Swediſh are evidently the ſame, and are very like the German, eſpecially the Low

* M. Mallet alludes to the queſtion, "Whether the Teutonic language was propogated from Germany northward to Scandinavia; or, from Scandinavia ſouthward to Germany?" Ed.

Low Dutch. It ſeems as if the foreign colonies under the conduct of Odin, who ſettled in Scandinavia and the North of Germany, had only introduced a ſofter pronunciation, a very few new words, and ſome ſmall difference in the terminations.

After what we have ſeen of the character and manners of the Scandinavians, we cannot form any very high idea of their language. As men only invent terms in proportion as they acquire ideas, language muſt of courſe have been at firſt very poor and unadorned, not at all expreſſive of a variety of abſtract notions; but among a free, independent and warlike people, it muſt have borrowed its colourings from the genius of the ſpeakers *. There is always ſomething to be admired in the language of a free people, however groſs and ignorant they may be in other reſpects: Such a language has always an energetic brevity, lively and ſententious turns, and pictureſque expreſſions, which the conſtraint of our education, the fear of ridicule, and the dominion of faſhion render the modern tongues incapable of retaining. But what muſt have contributed ſtill further to give ſtrength and ſublimity to that of the ancient Scandinavians, was their general and diſtinguiſhed taſte for poetry. This is a ſubject

* "Nations, like ſingle men, "have their peculiar ideas; theſe "peculiar ideas become the genius of their language, ſince the "ſymbol muſt of courſe correſpond to its arche-type. Ἦθος "χαρακτὴρ ἐστι τ' ἀνθρώπου λόγος." Hermes. p. 407. T.

ſubject ſo intereſting, as to deſerve to be treated with particular attention.

MANKIND, every where eſſentially the ſame, have been always led to poetical compoſition, prior to that of proſe. This ſeems, at preſent, the reverſe of the natural order; but we think ſo either through our prejudices or for want of putting ourſelves in the place of a people who are ignorant of the art of writing. Pleaſing ſounds, and the attractions of harmony would ſtrike at firſt every ear; but ſong could not long ſubſiſt without poetry. No ſooner was it obſerved how theſe two united powers fixed and impreſſed thoſe images on the mind, which the memory was deſirous of retaining; than they acquired a new degree of eſteem, eſpecially among ſuch as aſpired to a laſting fame. Verſe was made uſe of to preſerve the memory of remarkable events and great actions. The laws of a people, their religious ceremonies and rural labours were alſo recorded in numbers, becauſe theſe are ſubjects which, conſiſting of a great variety of particulars, might eaſily fail into oblivion. Hence it was that Greece could already boaſt of an Homer, an Heſiod, and of many other poets, ſeveral ages before PHERECYDES * had written in proſe. Hence among the Gauls and other Celtic nations, there were poems compoſed on all ſubjects from the earlieſt ages,

* He lived 600 years after the taking of Troy; whereas there were poets previous to that famous expedition.

which the Druids, who were appointed to educate the youth, frequently employed twenty years in teaching them to repeat *. This cuſtom, rendered ſacred by its high antiquity, which ever commands reſpect from the people, was in force many ages after the art of writing had pointed out a more perfect method of preſerving the memorials of human knowledge. In like manner the Scandinavians for a long time applied their Runic letters only to the ſenſeleſs purpoſes above-mentioned; nor did they during ſo many years ever think of committing to writing thoſe verſes with which their memories were loaded; and it is probable that they only wrote down a ſmall quantity of them at laſt. The idea of making a book never entered into the heads of thoſe fierce warriors, who knew no medium between the violent exerciſes and fatigues of war, or hunting, and a ſtupid lethargic ſtate of inaction. Among the innumerable advantages, which accrued to the northern nations from the introduction of the Chriſtian religion, that of teaching them to apply the knowledge of letters to uſeful purpoſes, is not the leaſt valuable. Nor could a motive leſs ſacred have eradicated that habitual and barbarous prejudice, which cauſed them to neglect ſo admirable a ſecret. The churches and monaſteries were at leaſt ſo many aſylums where this ſecret was preſerved, while the ferocity of manners which prevailed in the dark ages, tended again to conſign it to oblivion. The

* Cæſar. Comment. lib. vi. 14.

The theological disputes between the different sects had this good effect, that they obliged them to consult many ancient books, and to compose new ones. The Celtic religion, on the contrary, by relying on poetry and tradition for the preservation of its tenets, and in a manner forbidding the use of writing, lest they should be divulged, must needs extend the empire of barbarism and ignorance.

So long as that religion prevailed in the North, the use of letters being very limited; it is no paradox to say that verse was a necessary medium of knowledge, and the poet an essential officer of the state. And if it requires a peculiar and uncommon genius to excel in this art, the professors of it would of course acquire a very high degree of esteem and respect. All the historical monuments of the North are full of the honours paid this order of men both by princes and people; nor can the annals of poetry produce any age or country which reflects more glory and lustre upon it. The ancient chronicles constantly represent the kings of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden as attended by one or more SCALDS *; for this was the name they gave their poets. They were more especially honoured and caressed at the courts of those princes, who distinguished themselves by their great actions and passion for glory. HAROLD HARFAGRE, for instance, placed

* The word SCALD is judged by Torfæus to have signified originally "a smoother and polisher of language." Vide Torfæi Præfat. ad Orcades, folio. T.

placed them at his feafts above all the other officers of his court *. Many princes entrufted them both in peace and war with commiffions of the utmoft importance. They never fet out on any confiderable expedition without fome of them in their train. HACON, earl of Norway, had five celebrated poets along with him in that famous battle of which I have fpoken, when the warriors of Jomfburg were defeated; and hiftory records that they fung each an ode to animate the foldiers before they engaged †. But they enjoyed another advantage, which would be more the envy of the poets of thefe days. They were rewarded for the poems they compofed in honour of the kings and heroes, with magnificent prefents. We never find the SCALD finging his verfes at the courts of princes without being recompenfed with golden rings, glittering arms, and rich apparel. Their refpect for this order of men often extended fo far as to remit the punifhment of crimes they had committed, on condition they fued out their pardon in verfe; and we have ftill extant an ode, by which EGILL, a celebrated po-

-et,

* Vid. Hift. Norveg. vol. II. p. 21. Bartholin. Cauf. Contempt. a Dan. Mortis, p. 166.

† See Torf. Bartholin, p. 172. who produces other inftances to the fame purpofe: particularly that of OLAVE king of Norway, who placed three of his SCALDS about him to be eye witneffes of his exploits, (as defcribed by our author below): thefe bards compofed each of them a fong on the fpot, which Bartholin has printed and accompanied with a Latin verfion. Other fongs of the fame kind may be found in the fame author. T.

et, atoned for a murder he had been guilty of *. In a word, the poetic art was held in ſuch high eſtimation, that great lords, and even kings did not diſdain to cultivate it with the utmoſt pains themſelves. ROGVALD, earl of the Orkney iſlands, paſſed for a very able poet; he boaſts himſelf, in a ſong of his which is ſtill extant, that he knew how to compoſe verſes on all ſubjects †. King REGNER was no leſs diſtinguiſhed for his ſkill in poetry, than in war and navigation. Many of his poems were long preſerved in the North, and may be found inſerted in the hiſtory of his life: and it is well known that he died no leſs like a poet than an hero.

The reſpect, however, which the northern nations paid to their SCALDS was not owing to the nobility of their extraction. A people whoſe object was glory, could not fail of ſhowing a great deference to thoſe who both publiſhed it abroad, and conſigned it to futurity, let their original be what it would. A prince or illuſtrious warrior oftentimes expoſed his life with ſo much intrepidity only to be praiſed by his Scald, who was both the witneſs and judge of his bravery. It

* EGILL had even killed the ſon of that prince, who remitted his puniſhment: This was Eric Blodox king of Norway. The reader may ſee an Engliſh verſion of the poem EGILL compoſed on this occaſion, together with the original, in "Five Pieces of Runic "Poetry, tranſlated from the Ice- "landic language," 1763, [ſubjoined to the Second Volume of this edition.] T.

† Vid. Worm. Litter. Runic. p. 195.

It is affirmed that this kind of men, although poets, were never guilty of flattery, and never lavished their praises on heroes and kings themselves unless their gallant exploits were quite incontestible *. Hence arose the custom of always bringing them into the scene of action: OLAVE king of Norway placing three of them one day around him in battle, cried out with spirit, "You shall not relate what you have "only heard, but what you are eye-witnesses of your-"selves †." The same poets usually sung their verses themselves at solemn festivals and in great assemblies, to the sound of the flute or harp ‡. But the subject of these poems was not confined to one single event, such as a victory or some generous action; it was frequently a genealogical history of all the kings of the country, deduced down from the Gods to the reigning prince, who always derived his origin from them. These poems were, according to Tacitus, the only annals of the Germans §: They had great numbers of them, which were not wholly forgotten in the eighth century; since Eginhard relates, that CHARLEMAGNE caused them to be committed to writing— "And even learnt himself," adds the historian, "the "rude

* Vid. Bartholin. p. 154. et cap. 10 lib. i. passim. T.

† Vid. Olaf. Saga ap. Verel. ad Herv. Sag. p. 178. Bartholin. Caus. Contemp. a Dan. &c. p. 172.

‡ Stephan in not. ad Saxon. p. 12.

§ *Celebrant carminibus antiquis (quod unum apud illos memoriæ et annalium genus est) tuisconem, &c.* Tac. Germ. c. 10. T.

"rude and ancient fongs in which the exploits and the wars of the firft princes were celebrated." In poems of the fame kind confifted for many ages all the hiftory of the Scandinavians. A bard named THIODOLFE, celebrated in his verfes the exploits of Harold and thirty of his predeceffors; another called EYVIND, compofed an hiftórical poem which went back as far as Odin. Such are the fources whence Saxo drew his materials for the firft fix or feven books of his hiftory; and he might doubtlefs have derived great affiftance from them, if he had not happened to live in an age wholly deftitute of that exact fkill in criticifm, which knows how to feparate facts from the fictions with which they are blended.

The neceffity there was for poets, the natural attractions of the art itfelf, and thofe it derived from the manners of the age, greatly multiplied the number of SCALDS. An ancient Icelandic manufcript has preferved a lift of all fuch as diftinguifhed themfelves in the three northern kingdoms, from the reign of Regner Lodbrog to that of Valdemar II.*. They are in number two hundred and thirty, among whom we find more than one crowned head. But what is not lefs remarkable is, that the greateft part of them are natives of Iceland. The reader has doubtlefs by this time obferved that we are indebted to that ifland for almoft all the hiftorical monuments of the northern nations

* Viz. from A. D. 750, to 1157.—Vide SCALDATAL in Append. ad Lit. Run. Ol. Worm. p. 242.

nations now remaining. It cannot eafily be accounted for how it came to pafs, that a people disjoined from the reft of the world, few in number, depreffed by poverty, and fituated in fo unfavourable a climate, fhould be capable in thofe dark ages, of manifefting fuch a tafte for literature, and fhould even rife to the perception of the more refined mental pleafures.— While they were heathens, the Icelandic annalifts were always deemed the beft in the North. After they had embraced the Chriftian faith, they were the firft who thought of unravelling the chaos of ancient hiftory, who collected the old poems, digefted the chronicles into a regular form, and applied themfelves to refcue from oblivion the traditions of their pagan theology. Were we better informed of certain particulars relating to the ftate of the North during thofe remote ages, we might poffibly find the caufe of this phænomenon either in the poverty of the inhabitants of Iceland, which drove them to feek their fortunes at the neighbouring courts : Or in the fuccefs of their firft bards, which excited their emulation, and at the fame time prepoffeffed ftrangers in their favour : Or laftly, in the nature of their republican government, in which the talent of oratory, and the reputation of fuperior fenfe and capacity are the direct roads to refpect and preferment.

The ftile of thefe ancient poems is very enigmatical and figurative, very remote from the common language, and for that reafon, grand, but tumid ; fublime, but obfcure. If it be the character of poetry to have

nothing in common with profe, if the language of the Gods ought to be quite different from that of men, if every thing fhould be expreffed by imagery, figures, hyperboles, and allegories, the Scandinavians may rank in the higheft clafs of poets: Nor is this unaccountable. The foaring flights of fancy may poffibly more peculiarly belong to a rude and uncultivated, than to a civilized people. The great objects of nature ftrike more forcibly on rude imaginations. Their paffions are not impaired by the conftraint of laws and education. The paucity of their ideas, and the barrennefs of their language oblige them to borrow from all nature, images fit to cloath their conceptions in. How fhould abftract terms and reflex ideas, which fo much enervate our poetry, be found in theirs? They could feldom have been met with in their moft familiar converfations. The moment the foul, reflecting on its own operations recurs inwards, and detaches itfelf from exterior objects, the imagination lofes its energy, the paffions their activity, the mind becomes fevere, and requires ideas rather than fenfations; language then becomes precife and cautious, and poetry being no longer the child of pure paffion, is able to affect but feebly. If it be afked, what is become of that magic power which the ancients attributed to this art? It may be well faid to exift no more. The poetry of the modern languages is nothing more than reafoning in rhime, addreffed to the underftanding, but very little to the heart. No longer effentially connected with religion, politics or morali-

ty, it is at preſent, if I may ſo ſay, a mere private art, an amuſement that attains its end when it hath gained the cold approbation of a few ſelect judges.

The moſt affecting and moſt ſtriking paſſages in the ancient northern poetry, were ſuch as now ſeem to us the moſt whimſical, unintelligible and overſtrained : ſo different are our modes of thinking from theirs. We can admit of nothing but what is accurate and perſpicuous. They only required bold and aſtoniſhing images which appear to us hyperbolical and gigantic. What alſo contributes to render their poetry very obſcure at preſent, is that the language of it is borrowed from their mythology ; a mythology not ſo familiar to us as that of the Greeks and Romans. When they did not allude to their own fables, they took their metaphors from other ſubjects, which were commonly very far-fetched and remote : Thus a poet ſeldom expreſſed heaven by any other term than "the "ſcull of the giant Ymer," alluding to a fable on that ſubject. The rain-bow was called "the bridge of "the Gods :" Gold was "The tears of Freya :" Poetry, "the preſent, or the drink of Odin." The earth was either indifferently "the ſpouſe of Odin, "The fleſh of Ymer, The daughter of the night, "The veſſel which floats on the ages, or The founda-"tion of the air :" Herbs and plants were called, "the hair or the fleece of the earth." A combat was termed "a bath of blood, The hail of Odin, The "ſhock of bucklers :" The ſea was "the field of pi-"rates, and the girdle of the earth :" Ice, "the

"greateſt

"greateſt of all bridges:" A ſhip, "the horſe of the "waves:" The tongue, "The ſword of words," &c. Each of their deities might be expreſſed by an infinite variety of phraſes. In ſhort, a peculiar ſtudy of this kind of language was neceſſary to conſtitute a poet; for which reaſon they early compoſed a dictionary of it for the uſe as well of the Scalds, as their readers. The ſame Rogvald, earl of the Orkneys, before ſpoken of, is ſaid to have compoſed a work of this ſort, which, according to Wormius, is ſtill extant, under the name of THE POETICAL KEY *. Another is found at the end of the Icelandic EDDA, and is intitled SCALDA, or, The art of Poetry. This is a collection of epithets and ſynonimous words ſelected from their beſt poets, very like thoſe which are put into the hands of young people when they firſt apply themſelves to Latin poetry.

Yet they ſometimes compoſed verſes in a more ſimple ſtile, and nearer approaching to common language; but this only happened when in converſation a Scald, either to ſhew his happy talent, or to do more honour to the perſon with whom he converſed, anſwered in extemporary metre. This ſingular mode of expreſſing

* Vid. Worm. Litter. Runic. p. 195.——*Rogvaldus Orcadum comes, princeps egregius, inter alias nobiles dotes, quibus ornatus eſt, præſtantiſſimus et promptiſſimus fuit Rhythmista, et* CLAVEM RHYTHMITICAM, *quæ adhuc extat, confeciſſe dicitur. Habuit etiam ille in Palæstinam navigans itineris comites Rhythmistas duos Iſlandos, qui una cum ipſo res quotidie gestas rhythmis comprehenderunt, et magna apud illum in æstimatione fuerunt.* T.

ſing themſelves was very common among the ancient Scandinavians, and proves in what degree of eſteem this people held the art of poetry. The chronicles have preſerved a great number of ſuch converſations in verſe; and there is reaſon to believe that theſe poems, which might be ſung at firſt, and eaſily committed to memory, were oftentimes the text of which ſucceeding chronicles were nothing more than commentaries or expoſitions. There is no appearance that the verſes were compoſed by the authors of thoſe hiſtories: They are never aſſigned to any but the SCALDS by profeſſion; and are quoted by the hiſtorians as their proofs and vouchers: And beſides it is known to have been uſual with the Scalds to interlard their diſcourſe with extemporary verſes. There are to this day, both in the North, in Italy, and in other countries, many famous compoſers of *impromptu's*. Thus it is reported of an Icelandic bard, named SIVARD *, that when he ſpoke in proſe, his tongue ſeemed embarraſſed, and to deliver his thoughts with difficulty, but that he expreſſed himſelf in verſe with the greateſt fluency and eaſe. The hiſtorians frequently and poſitively aſſure us that theſe verſes were ſpoken off-hand. This is what is remarked in the life of the poet EGILL, for inſtance, who purchaſed his pardon from the king of Norway by ſinging an extemporary ode which ſtill remains, and is intitled THE RANSOM

OF

* Vid Olav. in Epiſt. apud Worm. Litter. Runic.

of Egill *. The ſame elogium is often given to another more ancient Scald, called Eyvind, and ſurnamed from his ſuperior talents, "The croſs of the "poets." All the chronicles mention his great facility in compoſing verſes, as a matter well known throughout the North.

We muſt not however infer, that theſe poets were wholly unconfined by rules, or that even they were not under very ſevere ones: it is true, if we may credit Wormius, they were ignorant of the ſhackles of rhime, which have ſo long galled modern poets †. But poſſibly this learned man ſhould rather have ſaid, that the old northern poets did not always make uſe of rhime; for he even quotes, in the ſame treatiſe, ancient poems which are not only in rhime, but even rhimed

* Vid. Torf. H. N. tom. ii. p. 188. et ſeq.

† By way of Appendix to his Literatura Runica, Wormius has given ſome of the laws of the ancient Runic Poetry communicated to him by a friend: One of theſe is, "*Rhythmorum veterum in*-"*finita fere ſunt genera, vulgo tamen* "*uſitatiorum centum triginta ſex eſſe* "*putantur*:" the author adds by way of corollary . . . *Nec inter hæc recenſebatur illud genus quo jam ludunt noſtrates, totum artificium in ὁμοιοτέλευτοις ponentes*. Meaning only that there were 136 ſorts of metre, without including rhyme; for he afterwards gives a long poem all in rhyme. But the publiſher having inadvertently added in the margin (by way of giving the contents of the paragraph) *Modernum Rhythmi genus veteribus incognitum*; ſuperficial Readers have been led into the miſtake, that Rhyme was wholly unknown to the northern Scalds, and by parity of reaſon to all the Gothic poets; whereas it was undoubtedly from theſe that this modern ornament of verſe derived its origin and uſe. T.

rhimed with the utmoſt exactneſs *. BARTHOLIN has alſo given us two little ſongs in rhime, which ſeem to be older than the tenth century †. It is probable that many more of the ſame age, are either totally loſt or concealed in manuſcripts which I am unacquainted with. Since that time the poets have more and more run into the uſe of rhime. We find in the collection of ancient monuments, publiſhed by Mr. Biorner, a pretty long poem, which, according to that author, was writ in the twelfth or thirteenth century; this poem is not only moſt exactly and uniformly in rhime,

* This is the famous Ode of EGILL, mentioned above; which is not only in ſingle, but double rhymes. Take a ſtanza by way of ſpecimen:

Raud hilmer hior
That var hrafn-agior
Fleinn hitte fior
Flugn dreyrúg ſpior
Ol Flagds gota
Tharbiodur ſkota
Thrad nift NARA
Nattuerd ara.

i. e. "The king dyed his ſword in "crimſon; his ſword that glutted "the hungry ravens. The weapon aimed at human life. The "bloody lances flew. The commander of the Scottiſh fleet fed "fat the birds of prey. The ſiſter of NARA [Death] trampled "on the foe: ſhe trampled on the "evening food of the eagle." See Five Pieces of Runic Poetry, *(ſubjoined)*, Olaii Worm. Literatur. Runic. p. 232. T.

† Vid. Olaf. Tryggueſon. Saga apud Bartholin. Cauſ. contempt. a Dan. mortis, p. 81, et p. 489.

rhime, but the meaſure ſeems to be much like what we (the French) call heroic or Alexandrine verſe. Some people have advanced that rhime is of a very ancient date among the Celtic nations; but it is difficult to give very ſolid proofs of this: it is, however, likely enough, if we reflect that the Scandinavians * were long acquainted with it, and that there is no kind of harmony or cadence more ſimple or more likely to catch the ear.

It is not eaſy to diſcover wherein conſiſted the mechaniſm and harmony of thoſe ancient verſes which were not in rhime. The learned who have made the northern languages their ſtudy, fancy they diſcover in ſome of them the Saphic meaſure, which many Greek lyric poets, and Horace in Latin ſo frequently choſe †. In others the poet ſeems to have tied himſelf

* This is true, ſuppoſing the Scandinavians were a branch of the Celtes: One may however infer, from its being uſed among thoſe northern tribes, that it early prevailed among the other Gothic nations. T.

† Dalin. Suea. Rik. Hiſt. lib. viii.——[This reſemblance to the Saphic meaſure, will, I am afraid, be found only imaginary. It may with more certainty be affirmed that the vaſt variety of metre uſed by the ancient SCALDS may chiefly, if not altogether, be reduced to different kinds of Alliteration. In Wormius we have an exact analyſis of one of theſe ſorts of metre: in which it was requiſite that the ſtanza or ſtrophe ſhould conſiſt of four diſtichs, and each verſe of ſix ſyllables. In each diſtich three words at leaſt were required to begin with the ſame letters, (that is, two words in one verſe, and one in the other), that there ſhould, beſides this, be two correſpondent ſyllables in each verſe,

ſelf up to begin the two firſt lines of each ſtrophe with the ſame letters, and to confine his verſe within ſix ſyllables.

verſe, and that none of the correſpondences ought immediately to follow each other, &c. as in the following Latin couplet:

ChriSTus Caput noSTrum
CorONet te bONis.

This appears to us at preſent, to be only a very laborious way of trifling; however, we ought not to decide too haſtily: every language has its own peculiar laws of harmony; and as the ancient Greeks and Romans formed their metre of certain artful diſtributions of their long and ſhort ſyllables: ſo the northern Scalds placed the ſtructure of theirs in the ſtudied repetition and adaptation of the vowels and conſonants.——The ſame mode of verſification was admired by our Anglo-Saxon anceſtors, and hath not wholly been laid aſide much more than two centuries among our Engliſh poets; ſee "Reliques of ancient Eng-"liſh poetry," Vol. II. p. 260.—It may not be amiſs to add, that the metre of the WELSH bards is altogether of the alliterative kind, and full as artificial as that of the ancient Scandinavians: Yet thoſe who thoroughly underſtand that language, aſſert that this kind of metre is extremely pleaſing to the ear, and does not ſubject the poet to more reſtraint than the different ſorts of feet did the Greek and Roman poets.

Perhaps it will not be difficult to find the difference between the metre of the ancient Claſſics, and that of the Gothic and Celtic bards, in the different genius of their reſpective languages. The Greek and Latin tongues chiefly conſiſted of polyſyllables, of words ending with vowels, and not overburdened with conſonants: their poets, therefore, (if they would produce harmony), could not but make their metre to conſiſt in quantity, or the artful diſpoſal of the long and ſhort ſyllables; whereas the old Celtic and Teutonic languages being chiefly compoſed of monoſyllables, could have had hardly any ſuch thing as quantity, and on the other hand abounding

fyllables. Others think they obferve that the initial letters of the lines correfpond in many different refpects, either in the fame or in different ftrophes. The moft fkilful inveftigators of this fubject affure us, that the poets perpetually invented new meafures, and reckon up one hundred and thirty-fix kinds *. The explication of them we muft leave to the affiduity of thofe who have reckoned them up.

This tafte for the abftrufe and complicated, could not fail of running them into allegories and enigmas of every kind: We often meet with princes and great warriors in the ancient chronicles, propofing riddles, and affixing penalties on fuch as could not unravel them. In the firft interview king Regner had with the beautiful fhepherdefs before-mentioned, he tried by enigmas to difcover whether her wit was anfwerable to her beauty. Another king, named Eric, rendered himfelf famous for being able to give immediate anfwers to thirty riddles, which Odin himfelf had come to propofe to him, having affumed the appearance of one Gest, a man extremely well verfed in this art. Thefe are ftill extant in an old Icelandic romance †. But excepting fome few, which are toler-

bounding in harfh confonants, the firft effort of their bards to reduce it to harmony muft have been by placing thefe confonants at fuch diftances from each other, fo intermixing them with vowels, and fo artfully interweaving, repeating, and dividing thefe feveral founds, as to produce an agreeable effect from their ftructure. T.

* Worm. App. Litt. Run. p. 165. rec. edit.

† Vid. Hervarer Saga. c. xv.

ably ingenious, they are either totally unintelligible, or built on verbal equivocations. The poets were not limited to this kind only. There is mention made from the earlieſt ages of LOGOGRYPHS *, and other ſtill more trifling ſpecies of wit, for which we happily want even names. Some of them muſt have coſt much labour, and all imply ſuch an acuteneſs and patience in the inventors, as would hardly be expected from a nation of warriors.

In regard to the old poems, all that is moſt needful to be known about them, is the peculiar genius, manner and taſte that runs through them. Some of them preſent us with the faithful and genuine mode of thinking of thoſe times, but they are often difficult to underſtand, and ſtill more to tranſlate. Nevertheleſs, to ſatisfy the curioſity of thoſe readers who like to view the original manners and ſpirit of a people, I have endeavoured to tranſlate ſuch fragments of ancient northern poetry as would beſt anſwer this purpoſe. Theſe tranſlations, together with a few explanatory notes, will be thrown to the end by way of ſequel, and as affording vouchers to this little work.

THERE

* A LOGOGRYPH is a kind of enigma, which conſiſts of taking, in different ſenſes, the different parts of the ſame word. See inſtances of this ſpecies of falſe wit in Ol. Wormii Literat. Runic. p. 183, 185, &c. T.

THERE remains now but one word to add by way of CONCLUSION. When the truth of fact is once folidly eftablifhed, we may fafely reafon concerning their caufes. From a reprefentation of fuch facts, (which are here only brought together, and left to fpeak for themfelves), a picture has been given of the ancient northern nations. But having thus informed ourfelves concerning the manners of this people, why may not we proceed a ftep farther, to confider the general caufes of their character. It does not feem impoffible here to difcover and purfue the path which nature hath taken. A great abundance of blood and humours, ftrong and rigid fibres, together with an inexhauftible vigour, formed the conftitutional temperament of the Scandinavians and Germans, as they do indeed of all favage people who live under a like climate *.

Hence

* *Sub Septentrionibus nutriuntur gentes immanibus corporibus, candidis coloribus, fangnine multo, quoniam ab humoris plenitate, cœlique refrigerationibus funt confirmati. Sanguinis abundantiâ ferro refiftunt fine timore. Qui refrigeratis nafcuntur regionibus ad armorum vehementiam paratiores funt, magnifque viribus ruunt fine timore, fed tarditate animi refringuntur* Vitruv. lib. vi. The ancients bear witnefs to thefe affertions; the fentiments of Vitruvius are here nothing more than their general opinion. [Let the reader caft his eye over the following paffages. *Septentrionales populi largo fanguine redundantes.* Veget. 1, 2. *Gothi confcientia virium freti, robore corporis validi, manu prompti.* Ifidor. Chronic. p. 730. *Germanicæ nationes, fæviffimis duratæ frigoribus, mores ex ipfo cœli rigore traxerunt.* Ifid. Orig. lib. ix. cap. 2. *Scythæ gens laboribus et bellis afpera: vires corporum immenfæ.* Juftin. lib. ii. cap. 3. *First Edit.*]

Hence proceeded that impetuofity and violence of their paffions when they were once roufed; and hence in their calmer moments that ferious, phlegmatic and indolent turn. The exercifes of war and the chace, which are great fatigues to a lefs robuft people, were to them only amufements, the means of fhaking off their lethargy, and of giving an agreeable and even neceffary motion to the body. Their relifh for this kind of life, the effect of conftitution, ftrengthened in its turn the caufe that produced it. Thus ftrongly moulded by the hand of nature, and rendered hardy by education, the opinion they entertained of their own courage and ftrength muft have given the peculiar turn to their character. A man who thinks he has nothing to fear, cannot endure any fort of conftraint; much lefs will he fubmit to any arbitrary authority, which he fees only fupported by human power, or fuch as he can brave with impunity. As he thinks himfelf not obliged to court any one's favour, or deprecate his refentment, he fcorns diffimulation, artifice or falfhood. He regards thefe faults, the effects of fear, as the moft degrading of all others. He is always ready to repel force by force; hence he is neither fufpicious nor diftruftful. A declared enemy to his enemy, he attacks openly; he confides in, and is true to others; generous, and fometimes in the higheft degree magnanimous, becaufe he places his deareft intereft in the idea he entertains and would excite of his courage. He does not willingly confine himfelf to fuch occupations as require more affiduity

than

than action, more application of mind than body; because moderate exercise is not sufficient to put his blood and fibres into such a degree of motion as is necessary to his own ease. Hence that distaste for the arts; and as the passions always endeavour to justify themselves, hence also that contempt and prejudice which represents the profession of the arts as dishonourable. War then becomes the only employment he can exercise with pleasure. The frequent and extreme vicissitudes, the fatigues and dangers attendant on this way of life, are alone able to throw him into those violent and continual agitations his habit of body requires. Now, if we suppose after this a whole society composed of such men, to what a degree of emulation must their courage arise? The love of distinction so natural to all men, having here no other object than personal valour, with what ardour must that quality have been cultivated and cherished? The love of arms becoming thus their ruling and universal passion, would soon characterise their religion, dictate their laws, and in short form their prejudices and opinions, which decide every thing among mankind.

But it may be objected, that if the manners and character of the ancient northern people proceeded so much from the climate, as the same cause still operates, why is the effect altered? This is only a specious difficulty. A nation is never solely influenced by climate, except in its infancy; while it is uncultivated and barbarous, it is only guided by instinct; the objects of sense, and the modes of living being as yet

simple

ſimple and uniform. When after ſome ages, reaſon has been expanded by experience and reflection, when legiſlators have ariſen, who either by the native force of genius, or by obſerving other nations, have ſo enlarged their underſtandings as to perceive the neceſſity of a change of manners, it is then that a new ſyſtem of principles, combats, and either divides the empire with, or totally triumphs over the firſt phyſical cauſes. Such was the immediate effect of Chriſtianity in the North, an event which, conſidered only in a philoſophical light, ſhould be ever regarded as the dawn of thoſe happy days, which were afterwards to ſhine out with ſuperior ſplendour. In effect, this religion, which tended to correct the abuſe of licentious liberty, to baniſh bloody diſſentions from among individuals, to reſtrain robberies and piracy, ſoftening the ferocity of manners, requiring a certain knowledge of letters and hiſtory, re-eſtabliſhing a part of mankind, who groaned under a miſerable ſlavery, in their natural rights, introducing a reliſh for a life of peace, and an idea of happineſs independent of ſenſual gratifications, ſowed the ſeeds, if I may ſo ſpeak, of that new ſpirit, which grew to maturity in the ſucceeding ages, and to which the arts and ſciences ſpringing up along with it, added ſtill more ſtrength and vigour.

But after all, is it very certain, as the objection ſuppoſes, that the climate of Europe hath not undergone a change ſince the times we ſpeak of? Thoſe who have read the ancients with attention, think differently, and conclude, that the degrees of cold are at

this

this time much lefs fevere than they were formerly. This is not a place to enlarge on a fubject which might appear foreign to the work *. Let it fuffice to obferve, that the rivers in Gaul, namely, the LOIRE and the RHONE were regularly frozen over every year, fo that frequently whole armies with their carriages and baggage could march over them †. Even the TYBER froze at Rome, and Juvenal fays pofitively, that it was requifite to break the ice in winter, in order to come at the water of that river ‡. Many paffages in Horace fuppofe the ftreets of Rome to be full of ice and fnow §. Ovid affures us, that the Black Sea was frozen annually, and appeals for the truth of this to the governour of the province, whofe name he mentions: he alfo relates feveral circumftances concerning that climate, which at prefent agree only

* L'Hiftoire des Celtes, tom. i. c. 12. may be confulted in this matter.

† Vid. Diod. Sic. lib. v. Dion alfo mentions the coldnefs of Gaul, lib. lxxix. and Statius in Sylv. lib. x. carm. 1.

‡ *Hybernum fractâ glacie defcendet in amnem,*
Ter matutino Tyberi mergetur. Juv. Sat. 6.

The abbé du Bos, from whom this quotation is borrowed, adds, that the TYBER at Rome now freezes no more than the NILE at Grand Cairo, and that the Romans reckon it a very rigorous winter if the fnow lies two days on the ground unmelted, and if there is any ice on the fountains which are expofed to the North.

§ See in particular lib. ii. fat. 3 et 6.

only with Norway or Sweden *. The foreſts of Thrace and Pannonia were full of 'white' bears and white boars, in like manner as now the foreſts of the North †. The northern part of Spain was little inhabited for the ſame cauſe ‡. In ſhort, all the ancients who mention the climate of Gaul, Germany, Pannonia and Thrace, ſpeak of it as inſupportable §, and agree that the ground was covered with ſnow the greateſt part of the year, being incapable of producing olives,

* Vid. Triſt. lib. iii. eleg. 9. De Ponto. lib. iv. eleg. 7. 9 10 —— Tournefort, a native of Provence, ſays in his Voyages, that there is no part of the world where the climate is more mild, nor the fruits more abundant than in THRACE; and that the BLACK SEA is now never frozen. Yet Pliny, Herodian, Strabo, and other authors expreſsly ſay, that THRACE is in a moſt frightful climate, that the inhabitants are forced to bury in the earth and to cover over with dung, during the winter, all the fruit-trees they wiſh to preſerve. Ovid and Strabo agree in ſaying, that the countries about the Boriſthenes and the Cimmerian Boſphorus are both uninhabited and uninhabitable by reaſon of the cold. Vid. Plin. lib. xv. c. 18. Herodian. lib. i. p. 26. Strabo 11. Ovid. Triſt. lib. iii.

† Vid. Pauſan. Arcad. c. xii. The Gauliſh and German horſes were very ſmall and ill-made, as are theſe of the coldeſt parts of Scandinavia, which M. Buffon attributes to the ſevere cold of thoſe countries. V. Hiſt. Nat. tom. iv. du Cheval. *Equi non formâ conſpicui.* Tac Germ. *Jumenta Germanis parva et deformia.* Cæſar de bell. Gallic. lib. xiv.

‡ Vid. Strab. lib. iii. [Polybius ſpeaks of Arcadia itſelf as ſituate under a cold and humid climate. Lib. iv. c. 21. *First Edit.*

§ *Quid istis locis aſperius?* Cicer. *Sithonia nix.* *Germania informis terris.* *Aſpera cœlo.* *Germania frugiferarum arborum impatiens.* Tacitus paſſim. *Gallicâ hyeme frigidior.* Petronius. *Scythico quid frigore pejus.* Ovid, &c. *First Edit.*

olives, grapes, and most other fruits. It is easy to conceive that the forests being cleared away, the face of the country better cultivated, and the marshy places drained, the moist exhalations which generate cold, must be considerably lessened, and that the rays of the sun must have a freer access to warm the earth. The same thing has happened in North America since the Europeans have carried there their wonted industry *. The history of the North leaves us no room to doubt that there have been vast forests cut down; and by this single means extensive marshes have been dried up and converted into land fit for cultivation. Without mentioning the general causes which insensibly effect the destruction of forests, it was common to see these on fire, in order to procure fertile fields. This was so usual a practice in Sweden, that this country is supposed to have taken its name from hence †. A king of that country was sirnamed the WOOD-CUTTER, for

* "Our colonies in North America," says a learned Englishman, "become more temperate, in proportion as we cut down the forests; but they are, in general, colder than the countries of Europe situated under the same latitude." Vid. Hume's Political Discourses, Disc. 10. p. 246. Father Charlevoix observes the same of Canada. "Experience," says he, puts it past contradiction, that the cold decreases in proportion as the country is discovered." &c. Journal Historique d'un Voyage en Amerique. Lettre X. p. 188.

† From the old Cimbric word SUIDIA, to burn: Hence lands cleared away and prepared for cultivation are called in the North *Suidior* and *Suidioland*. The same derivation holds in the German dialect; *Sueden*, from *Sueda*, to burn. Vid. Olai Vereli Notæ in Hist. Gotr. et Rolv. p. 9. 1664. 12mo. T.

for having grubbed up and cleared vast provinces, and felled the trees with which it was all covered. Nor were they less cleared away in Norway and Denmark. Thus a change in the climate must long have preceded that in the manners.

What conclusion ought we to draw from all this? If for these fifteen or sixteen centuries, the arts, sciences, industry and politeness have been incessantly advancing in the north of Europe, we cannot but evidently discover three causes of this, which, though different in their natures, have yet been productive of the same effect. The first is that restlessness natural to the people of all nations, but which acts more forceably on the inhabitants of Europe, and is ever urging them to exchange their present condition, in hopes of a better: the second, slower but equally sure, is the change of climate: the third, more sensible, more expeditious, but more accidental, is that communication formed between mankind by commerce and religion, and cemented by a thousand new relations; which has in a short time transported from the south into the north new arts, manners and opinions. These three causes have continually operated, and the face of Scandinavia changes daily. It already shines with somewhat more than borrowed lights. Time produces strange revolutions. Who knows whether the Sun will not one day rise in the NORTH?